

Dieter Appelt

Armando

Thomas Florschuetz

(e.) Twin Gabriel

Raimund Kummer

Via Lewandowsky

Raffael Rheinsberg

Eran Schaerf

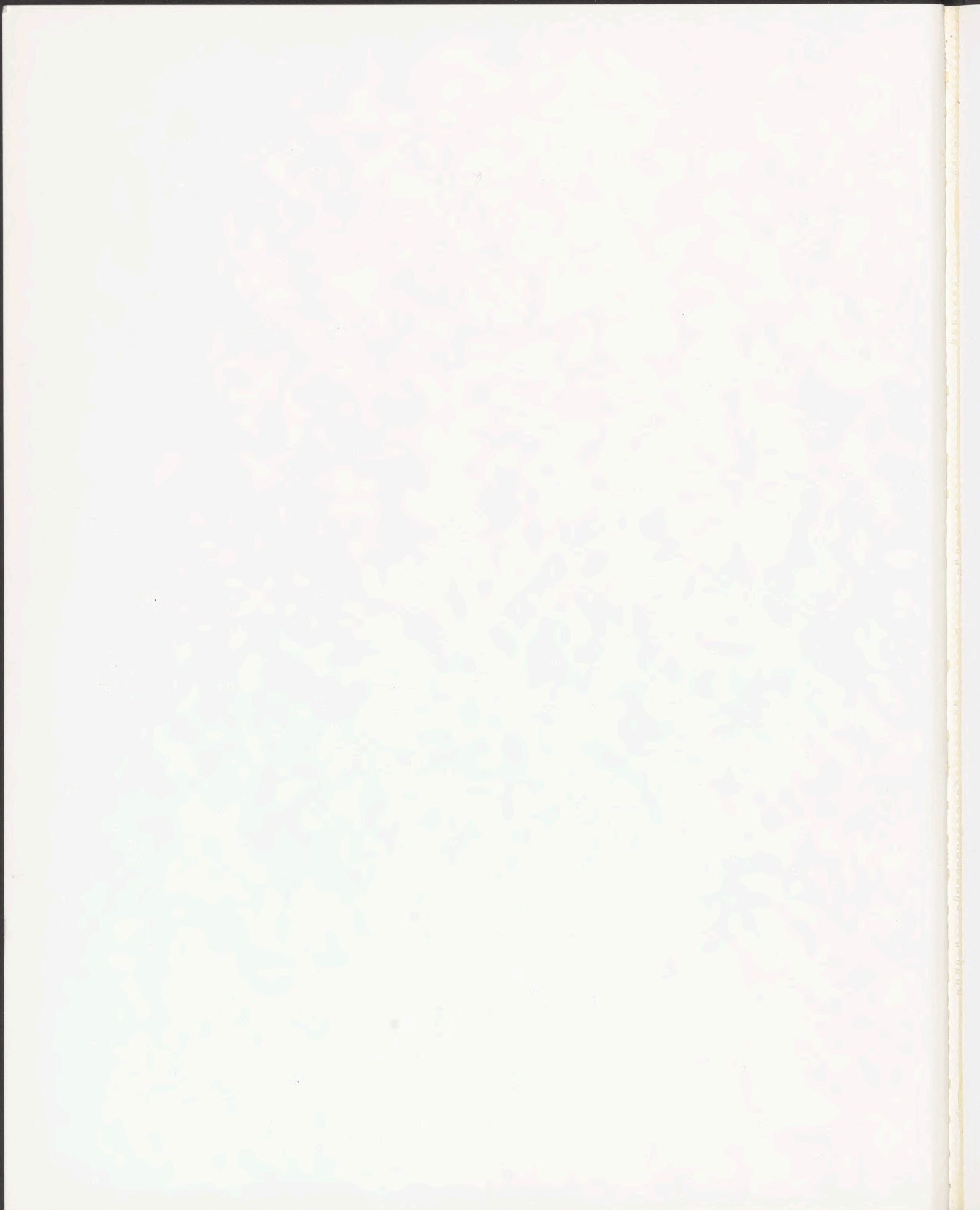
Georg Zey

INTERFACE

BERLIN ART

IN THE

NINETIES



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INTERFACE

Berlin Art in the Nineties

May 23 – July 5, 1992

The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.

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in•ter•face (n. in/tər fas/: v. in/tər fas/, in/tər fas/), n., v., **-faced, -fac•ing**. —n. **1.** a surface regarded as the common boundary of two bodies, spaces, or phases. **2.** the facts, problems, considerations, theories, practices, etc., shared by two or more disciplines, procedures, or fields of study: *the interface between chemistry and physics*. **3.** a common boundary or interconnection between systems, equipment, concepts, or human beings. **4.** communication or interaction: *Interface between the parent company and its subsidiaries has never been better*. **5.** a thing or circumstance that enables separate and sometimes incompatible elements to coordinate effectively: *The organization serves as an interface between the state government and the public*. **6. Computers.** **a.** equipment or programs designed to communicate information from one system of computing devices or programs to another **b.** any arrangement for such communication. —v.t. **7.** to bring into an interface. **8.** to bring together; connect or mesh: *The management is interfacing several departments with an information service from overseas*. —v.i. **9.** to be in an interface. **10.** to function as an interface. **11.** to meet or communicate directly; interact, coordinate, synchronize, or harmonize (often fol. by *with*): *The two communications systems are able to interface with each other*. [1880–85; INTER- + FACE]

Terrie Sultan

INTRODUCTION

During the 1980s, several major exhibitions offered American audiences their first opportunities to see and learn about art from Germany. Perhaps most important among these was BERLINART: 1961 – 1987. Organized by the Museum of Modern Art, BERLINART explored how art was shaped within a metropolis that was both a postwar fulcrum in the ideological battle between communism and capitalism, and a city that, despite its physical isolation, remained curiously central to the activities of the international avant-garde. Writing in the introduction for the catalogue that accompanied BERLINART, organizing curator Kynaston McShine noted that “Berlin stands for every place in the modern world, every vulnerable city and town. It is a symbol of freedom and freedom in the arts, and of the possibility of the arts developing in a free way, in spite of a threatening future.”

Five years later, unprecedented changes in the social and political fabric of Germany have once again pinpointed world attention on the changing face of this city of paradoxes. Just as the physical division of Berlin stood as a challenging symbol of resistance to cultural, social, and political oppression, the sudden dismantling of the Berlin Wall in December 1989, as well as the unification that followed, remains a potent symbol of the ability of people to overcome limitations and constraints. Berlin retains its importance as a herald of the larger concerns that preoccupy contemporary society. The breach of the Berlin Wall signaled the beginning of a sweeping revision of Europe's social order that is still proceeding.

The concept of interface, as a meeting place where diverse ideas can interact and coordinate harmoniously, has replaced the idea of Berlin as an island of opposition, and this notion provides a perfect metaphor for this current survey of art from Berlin, which the Corcoran is proud to present. INTERFACE: BERLIN ART IN THE NINETIES presents the work of nine artists as a microcosm for the aesthetic ideas active in Berlin today. These artists demonstrate a diversity of media and content that is intrinsic to a city with a rich cultural history. In their work personal experience, mythology, history, and language are mined, dissected, and reinvested with new meaning; social commentary, the role of style in the domain of politics, and ambitious mythmaking inform their work. Armando, Dieter Appelt, Raffael Rheinsberg and Raimund Kummer were born before the construction of the wall, and their work, which matured in the 1970s and 1980s, reflects the ambiguous

realities and conflicting tensions of that time. Thomas Florschuetz, Else Gabriel, Via Lewandowsky, Georg Zey, and Eran Schaerf are representative of a generation of artists whose conceptions were circumscribed by Berlin's physical and psychological isolation. Seen together, the work of these artists, whether painting, photography, sculpture, or installation, explores the full range of aesthetic and philosophical possibilities suggested by one of the most significant generational and ideological symbols of this century.

In August 1991 Dr. Lothar Griessbach and Ruth v. der Wenge Gräfin Lambsdorff of the German-American Cultural Fund approached the Corcoran Gallery of Art with the idea of presenting an exhibition of new art from Berlin as the coda to a major festival of German art and culture planned for presentation in Washington, D.C. in the spring of 1992. Working in cooperation with the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the National Building Museum, the German-American Cultural Fund, and the Museumspädagogischer Dienst Berlin, the Corcoran Gallery of Art is pleased to participate in this festival through the presentation of INTERFACE: BERLIN ART IN THE NINETIES.

The organization of such a project requires the enthusiasm and diligence of a number of individuals. The curators of INTERFACE Eckhart Gillen and Hanne Loreck, worked closely with the Gallery to assure a selection of representative artists whose work would serve as a provocative introduction to the ideas and issues currently influencing Berlin artists. A special thanks is also extended to Dr. Songrit von Deckwitz who coordinated all aspects of the project. The participating artists, Dieter Appelt, Armando, Thomas Florschuetz, Else Gabriel, Raimund Kummer, Via Lewandowsky, Raffael Rheinsberg, Eran Schaerf, and Georg Zey were enthusiastic and generous in giving their time and energy to the selection and installation of their works, for which we are deeply appreciative.

David C. Levy, president and director, and members of the Corcoran staff devoted themselves to the realization of this exhibition. Special acknowledgement is due to William B. Bodine, Jr., assistant director for curatorial affairs, for his knowledgeable advice. Registrars Cindy Rom and Julie Solz coordinated many complex details concerning loans, shipping, and logistics; Clyde Paton and Jon Mason oversaw a sensitive installation process. Susan Rosenbaum, vice president for development and public affairs, and Susan Wall, director of special events and corporate relations, coordinated various aspects of the special events surrounding the presentation of the exhibition.

The author is Curator of Contemporary Art at the Corcoran Gallery of Art

Lothar Griessbach

PREFACE

Berlin and the United States of America have a long and involved history, beginning with the signing of the Treaty of Amity and Commerce of 1785 with Prussia. They were especially close from the Berlin Airlift of 1948 on through the unwavering support during the process of unification in 1989/90. This exhibit is shown while a new chapter in this relationship opens. Already we look back to the 1989 revolution in East Germany as a major historical watershed.

This exhibit is meant to be a symbol of our continued friendship. The German American Cultural Fund, an organization of and funded by German business, wants to take this moment to celebrate together with our American friends in Washington D.C.

The photographic images shown in the National Building Museum remind us of the scene in 1989 when the Wall was breached, while the paintings and installations in the Corcoran Gallery of Art, representing a selection of Berlin avant-garde, seem to herald the future. The energy evident in the works of art presented in the Corcoran Gallery stems from the starkness of Berlin, as documented by the artistic photography.

The effort to bring this Berlin art to Washington was extraordinary. Encouraged and accepted by the Washington curators, Terrie Sultan and William B. Bodine, Jr., of the Corcoran Gallery of Art and David Chase of the National Building Museum, and the leaders of these eminent Washington institutions, Ambassador Robert W. Duemling and Dr. David Levy, the German-American Cultural Fund was able to proceed with incorporating its project into the TRIBUTE TO GERMANY festival, under the stewardship of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and its Chairman, James D. Wolfensohn. We were truly fortunate to have the professional support of the Museumspädagogischer Dienst Berlin and its capable and hard-working curators, Eckhart Gillen and Hanne Loreck.

My deep appreciation and gratitude goes to the mentioned, and to Songrit von Deckwitz and the officers of the German-American Cultural Fund, Edith Diedrichsen and Clemens Kochinke in particular, who all gave generously – energy, time and encouragement. Aurelia Forden, my assistant, contributed oversight and professional support to this endeavor, for which I am very grateful.

Special mention should be made of the Minister of Cultural Affairs, Ulrich Roloff-Momin, who committed Berlin to financially support the essential preparations in that

city. Without the support of Dr. Jochen Boberg, Director of the Museumspädagogischer Dienst, this exhibit could not have taken place.

This event would not have taken its form and shape without the creative input by Ruth von der Wenge Gräfin Lambsdorff, whose professional and personal involvement is present in every aspect of this endeavor.

The author is President of the German-American Cultural Fund

Ulrich Roloff-Momin

A MESSAGE FROM BERLIN'S MINISTER OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

In the past decades Berlin has always been a kind of yardstick for international developments. One of its special functions was acting as a seismograph registering the changes in relations between East and West. In the wake of recent events, the significance of the city has changed and in some respects greatly increased. Berlin must redefine its position, as the center of a unified Germany, as a metropolis in the heart of Europe, and as a place from which European relations to other continents can be formed.

Hard-line positions are slowly being reconciled; ideologies which developed amidst conflicts of opinion over the course of several generations appear to be disintegrating. After more than two years people are only just beginning to understand the impact of this overwhelming process which has unalterably changed the face of the earth. We lack the words and images which could make this transformation, which up until now has been considered *utopian*, more human and real. As a result, the principal factor determining current policies seems to have been the language of money, accompanied by alarming forms of isolation. The soil is too thin to support a new Europe, let alone a new world system. It must be strengthened and secured by a world view which does not regard all of its problems as solved, but is willing to reconsider and reflect them. The challenges are great but unavoidable. The new situation calls for culture and art which enable us to define our position, form personal identities, and unite peoples and nations. It is necessary to create *images* capable of showing the significance of this transformation process, inducing a dialogue, and providing a form of language to adequately meet this challenge.

It is essential for Berlin to send out signals describing the characteristics of this process, in order to clarify the responsibilities we must be prepared to assume.

Thus the project INTERFACE: BERLIN ART IN THE NINETIES comes at exactly the right time. The Berlin artists chosen by the curators Hanne Loreck and Eckhart Gillen represent different generations — those conditioned by reflecting on the past and on memory on the one hand, and those who no longer allow for nostalgia on the other; they accurately embody the intersecting point between the old and new situations. The Berlin of the twenties, the dreams of a metropolis from the beginning of our century, and the front-line ideology of the last 45 years are no longer valid definitions. We are carefully but resolutely searching for a

foundation to replace them. The works shown in this exhibition all attest to this search. The artists use their means sparingly and consciously limit the range of colors, whereby the paintings, installations, photographs, and sculptures avoid historicist pathos and fleeting, intentionally sensationalistic gestures. Thus they describe the situation in which Berlin finds itself, with a language that clears a path forward.

I would like to thank the Corcoran Gallery of Art, the German-American Cultural Fund, and all of their employees and American friends who made it possible for this new Berlin art scene to be shown in Washington. My thanks also go to the Berlin artists, their willingness to go along with this experiment, and the Museumspädagogischer Dienst Berlin which was in charge of the project.

I hope that this exhibition will open up a dialogue which is vital to the current situation in Berlin.

Translated by Johanna Bauman

Ruth von der Wenge Gräfin Lamsdorff

GERMANY — TRIBUTE TO A NEW REALITY

INTERFACE — The title stands for the contact point between East and West, past and present in the arts in Berlin today. Showing this is the goal of the exhibition.

Art historians and curators have always tried to confront and identify the traces of new realities in the art scene, which is sensitive to historical events. Artists, far removed from political debates and economic negotiations, examine the new realities in an individual manner and convey the changes in their surroundings on a different wavelength.

Washington, as a center of political power with an overwhelming offer of artistic events, seemed a fitting place to highlight Berlin contemporary art after the political reunification of Germany, and to show what artistic positions had become visible in the reunified city. After the opening of the Berlin Wall, a media-induced wave of enthusiasm for Germany and Berlin had swept through the United States.

This is the only explanation for the impossible becoming possible. In less than a year exhibition spaces were found for INTERFACE at the Corcoran Gallery of Art and the accompanying yet separate photography exhibition IMAGES OF A CITY at the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C. We of the German-American Cultural Fund are particularly fortunate to have the Corcoran Gallery of Art as our host; not least because of such outstanding recent exhibitions as TONY CRAGG, SCULPTURE, 10 + 10 or CHANGING REALITY: RECENT SOVIET PHOTOGRAPHY. The exhibition KEITH HARING, ANDY WARHOL AND WALT DISNEY will be shown simultaneously with INTERFACE.

I would like to thank my friends Lee Kimche McGrath and Mrs. Sigrid Spalding for introducing me to David Levy, the president of the Corcoran Gallery of Art, and Ambassador Robert W. Duemling, the president and director of the National Building Museum; both immediately agreed to take part in the project. Their spontaneous commitment despite administrative obligations cannot be appreciated enough. Heartfelt thanks also go to curators Terrie Sultan and Bill Bodine for their competence and helpfulness. Amazingly, their enthusiasm sometimes exceeded our own. David Chase, curator of the National Building Museum, also deserves our gratitude for the dedication which he devoted to the realization of the photography exhibition.

INTERFACE - BERLIN ART IN THE NINETIES was conceived with the help of the Museumspädagogischer Dienst Berlin

and its commissioned curators Eckhart Gillen and Hanne Loreck. Additional financial support was provided by the Minister of Cultural Affairs in Berlin.

We wanted to include artists representative of the wide spectrum of painting, installation and photography in the changed situation in Berlin, opening up the possibility for a stimulating discussion. Of course a selection had to be made in accordance with the available space. The work of the nine artists and five photographers illustrates nevertheless essential positions within the artistic dialogue in Berlin.

It remains to be seen to what extent INTERFACE will succeed in showing the features of the new cosmopolitan culture in Berlin at the end of the millennium.

A special debt of gratitude is owed to everyone who dared to believe in this project. Without their assistance, this politically and artistically relevant exhibition could never have been realized.

The author is Director of the German-American Cultural Fund

Translated by Johanna Bauman

HANNE LORECK

The Leap into the Void Berlin Art at the Beginning of the Nineties

The definition of Berlin is as fragile as that of art ...
Berlin is the eye in the whirlwind.
Marcel Broodthaers, 1980

In the wasteland at the center of the city, they leap into space, leap from an ordinary construction crane, in order to be free of gravity for a few seconds, free of the weight of the world and the weight of the self. The jumper wants to experience his body as a reflex in the switching station of the head – characteristic of pleasure *in extremis*. But, as Maurice Blanchot warns:

“The word body, its danger: how easily it creates the illusion that you are already outside meaning, untarnished by consciousness/unconsciousness. The insidious return of the natural, of nature. The body is aimless, mortal, immortal, unreal, imaginary, fragmentary. The patience of the body is already and still the mind.”¹

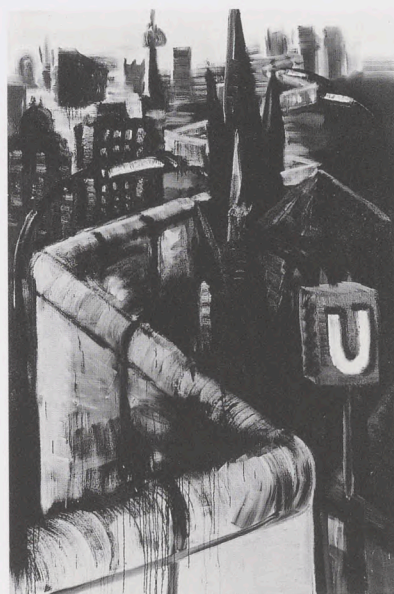
With their feet tied to a rubber rope, they plunge into the depths, briefly bouncing up just above the ground and gradually swinging to a halt: bungee jumping, originally an initiation rite, here a buyable test of courage, a costly game (100 marks) of mortal fear and the question of meaning. Location: Potsdamer Platz, a bleak square, whose mere name, however, always evokes the heyday of the metropolis – glamour and speed, art and culture, fashion and more. But today, Potsdam Square is a non-place, an ugly vacuum, emptier in 1992 than ever before.

“Berlin Art” is unique. Is there important contemporary art anywhere else that is presented in connection with a city? “Berlin Art” – this postwar phenomenon exists, or rather: still exists, because it is intimately bound up with the specific history of this city. Didn't the construction of the Wall, in 1961, prove the existence of the half-city, didn't it make this existence downright visible with its ring of concrete slabs, emphasize it by separating the fragment, the partial body, severing an “inside” from an “outside” with a different ideological occupation? West Berlin, the German city whose flat surface area remained unalterable for decades, whose stasis remained clearcut, while other big cities grew by leaps and bounds. The Wall brought a name for the flat, empty, deserted terrains that show traces of destruction even today: No Man's Land – a paradoxical geographic name full of romantic significance, creating meanings that proliferated lavishly and gaudily across the unendurable void of the interface. It would

seem as if emptiness and devastation always demanded an apparent wealth of meanings in times of crisis.

During the nineteen-eighties, the painters of Berlin produced these meanings in a highly readable and marketable manner (rep.1). But now, this definition no longer holds; the penmanship that brought it about – the Wall – has been erased: torn down, sold off, pulverized and painted to bits. Berlin is going through a transitional phase in its identity as a city, a place of regulated ideology production, which solidified and solo-ized the West Berliners the way the ring of the Wall held the surface of the city together – towards the urbanity that is the time of the code, the time of the dispersal and total interchangeability of elements.

This new scenario demands irony, sobriety, analysis – features that characterize the art of Marcel Duchamp, an art that deals with the *empty grave*. Here, the empty grave, shifted against Christian perception, is not the place where the body is to reappear; it is the place of the principle of disappearance and appearance per se. Duchamp's art tries to dissolve the conventionalized antithesis of chance and strategy, emaciated by doubts and resolutely driven by the notion of a useless and senseless existence. In this way, his art becomes precisely organic. It concentrates on both optical illusion and X-ray photography, on the physiology of motion and on eroticism: “I



1 Rainer Fetting, DURCHGANG SÜDSTERN
B 100, 1988
oil, sand on canvas, 300 x 200 cm
Courtesy of Raab Galerie, Berlin

wanted to go to a completely dry drawing, a dry conception of art. And the mechanical drawing for me was the best form of this dry form of art.”²

Fascinated, I kept watching and watching the jumpers, who demonstrated their existences by means of their bodies; at the time, I was visiting the Martin Gropius Building near the now demolished Wall in order to view METROPOLIS, Berlin's largest exhibition of contemporary art during the past few years. And in my mind's eye I saw Yves Klein's *Leap into the Void*, 1960, (rep.2) – the culmination of his concept of a radically subjective art lifting off toward immateriality and transcendence. The symbol of this new art was to be the abrogation of gravity. And now here, on Potsdam Square, the utterly unartistic leap into space (rep.3), the individual catharsis, which short-circuited so strangely, indeed memorably, with the yawning gap of the center animated only by the myth of the Golden Twenties.

METROPOLIS declared Marcel Duchamp to be the “spiritual father” of the artists on display (in 1966, Duchamp had said far more soberly: “I am a prototype. Every generation has one.”³) This 1991 exhibition officially marked a turning point, a refocusing. Berlin art had almost always been sumptuous, and the painters would cite Picasso as their forebear, which was then confirmed in 1982 by a still famous exhibition, ZEITGEIST. Ten years later, it was seen as an art of media, conceptualism, space-specific and situational. Today, in this context, we can speak of a broader public interest in Berlin's artistic directions, which range from conceptual trends to Real-kunst (a conceptual art which declares ready mades, everyday situations and everyday activities to be art). Since the late nineteen-seventies, Berlin artists, relatively unnoticed and parallel to the neo-Fauves craze, have developed a modern and manifold vocabulary of forms. For decades, the art that was shown authorized by cultural politics was an art inspired by the sacrosanct value of the traditional craft of painting and the figurative picture – guarantors of an ethics and thereby of meaning.

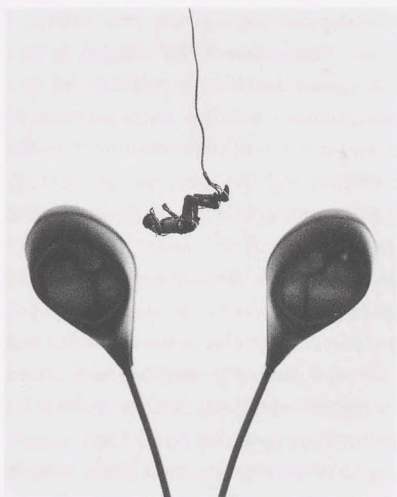
After World War II, when the first galleries opened up in the ruins of Berlin, they presented the Expressionists, the painters of Neue Sachlichkeit (New Realism), the Verists, the Surrealists, and the Dadaists. The expressionist painter Max Pechstein began teaching at Berlin's Academy of Arts in 1945, and Karl Schmitt-Rottluff in 1947 And didn't this approach also have the ideological advantage of participating in the rehabilitation of what had been labeled “Degenerate Art”? Of course, the thoroughly militant features of Expressionism, Berlin's favorite art era, were overlooked – an oversight that can be explained only by a blind desire for a seamless continuity and for establishing



2 Yves Klein, THE LEAP INTO THE VOID
Paris, October 1960

an identity on the tabula rasa of postwar Germany. Expressionism's militancy was exemplified as early as in 1911, when Franz Marc made no bones about the goals of Die Wilden – the German fauves: “The dreaded weapons of Die Wilden are their ‘new ideas’. These ideas kill more effectively than steel and break things that were considered unbreakable.”⁴ Expressionism introduced the myth of the human being who is ill because of his prostheses – his books, formulas, machines, apparatuses, which impoverish him by externalizing any “original and intrinsic ability.”⁵ This produced the notion of the physical shell with its hollow center, around which human devices orbit.

The artists of the postwar generation, the sons and daughters of these highly expressive Berlin art parents, were dubbed “visionaries”. Their paintings were helpless attempts to exorcise the horrors that had been endured and that no imagination could ever reproduce – meaningful art as a negation of the local crisis-like void, which remained visible and palpable throughout the sixties and seventies, unlike other destroyed West German cities, which had long since filled their gaps in the course of reconstruction and the economic boom. Then came Critical Realism, and it was at the latest with this use or alteration of Socialist Realism that West Berlin voluntarily became East Germany's artistic foreign office. During the nineteen-eighties even Die Neuen Wilden, the neo-Fauves, smugly delighted in the topography of the city of ruins, which they transferred to gigantic canvases sporting impasto masses of pure pigments and variations of motifs. They coquettishly toyed with familiar aspects of figurative iconography and the quite earnest goal of re-revolutionizing art by



3 Bungee jumper on Potsdam Square
Berlin, summer 1991

resorting to vehement gestures and to themes such as the human body, nature, and the big city. And so people who were starved for pictures were fobbed off with those paintings of brickwork and German history – which did not sustain them for long. Even after it was torn down, the Wall still dominated such an interesting exhibition as *THE FINITENESS OF FREEDOM*, which invaded the Stronghold of Painting in 1990: internationally renowned artists set up (outdoor) installations to point out the new old cityscape forged by the Wall – a subtle spectacle of romantic fascination with ruins.

That same year brought DIETER APPELT'S photographic cycle, *Uranus*. Appelt, better known in France and the United States than in Berlin, works primarily with the aspect of time. Space is secondary for him, because it is occupied as the discursive space, as which it constituted the stable basis for classical and then subsequently "wild" painting of the nineteen-eighties. In Berlin, the delimited, sharply defined place as the "real" seemed to dominate a diffuse time hovering between myth and lack, in which one had to stand one's ground. The Greek deity Uranus, the son and husband of Gaia (Earth – born of chaos), was castrated by his own son, Cronos. Dieter Appelt's photo series *Uranus* (rep. p.36–38) shows details of a prison camp in Rüdersdorf, south-east of Berlin, in the former German Democratic Republic. As far back as the nineteenth century, ships carried hewn limestones from the quarries there, and this construction material was used by Karl Friedrich Schinkel and his students to create the legendary and now barely visible Berlin of that era. Until 1988, when the camp was closed down, the prisoners had

to clean the filters of the present-day lime factories. Whenever it rained, the fine, bright, ubiquitous dust, which settled into every pore and also into the lungs of the inmates, turned into a crust, an eerily beautiful sediment. This virtually grown beauty, readily mistaken for a "natural" phenomenon, is what shows the perversity in the formal transformation of, say, a barrack roof beam into an Early Gothic gargoyle (see rep. p.37). Thus, we witness an aesthetics that seems to exist beyond any social context: by means of time, beauty distorts its cruelest origin by coating it with "beautiful" semblance. This "beautiful semblance" disappoints and disabuses us of the idea that the representation of the inhuman would necessarily have to be hideous and repugnant. It is precisely this connection that is illuminated by Appelt's photographic work *Uranus*. The photographer lets the film inscribe the reflecting object for hours on end. It is as if the layers of light were covering the reproduced deposits. Diaphanous and inviolate, the likeness testifies to the immaterial process of its genesis in the course of time. Nor are the objects given over to the visual process, for not even that which is immediately grasped by the eye, the raw material of seeing, has a substratum.⁶ The depicted object illuminates its derivation from permanent transformation by time in its likeness itself, where its fragility leaves its traces. However much the viewer might want to penetrate this transparency, he will never be able to see the bottom of the strata. For Appelt's chronophotographic procedure desynchronizes time. Forms lose any resemblance with reality and they vanish, "for they already inhabit an entirely different time, a time without memory traces."⁷

The development of Berlin's art politics and art took place with a deliberate rejection of the fiat of abstract art, which had been mandated in 1946 by the *SALON DES RÉALITÉS NOUVELLES* (SALON OF NEW REALITIES) in Paris; that same year, the *GREAT DRESDEN ART EXHIBITION* had comprehensively honored the previously outlawed artists. Three years earlier, in late 1943, the destruction of Berlin had begun: thousands of people were killed and whole blocks and sections razed to the ground. That same year, in New York, far from the European theater of operations, painting was exempted from the existential issue of survival when Jackson Pollock's dripping canvases were shown for the first time: in these pieces, the artist "lavished" his entire bodily energy on the pure, painterly, non-artisan gesture. *Action Painting* was invented.

It is certainly no coincidence that during that same year, 1943, penicillium notatum, which had been invented in 1928, went into industrial production in America in order to widely separate the war from death. The new medi-

cament halted the invisible, but unlimited cell-destroying proliferation of bacteria, thus saving the lives of hundreds of thousands of seriously wounded soldiers. After penicillin was released for civilian use in 1946, TB and syphilis were no longer fatal: the Western world could regard individual survival as more certain than ever before. Incidentally, at this very point, the atomic bomb had been tried out for the first time; people grew accustomed to the idea of potential mass annihilation, a radically "new" possibility. Indeed, artists such as Henry Moore or Group Zero saw this "phenomenon" as aesthetically explosive. However, the nuclear age is no more our present topic than is AIDS.

From now on, the human imagination, unendangered and detached from any link to multiple strata of reality, began playing with a pure, cheerful aesthetics: in 1966, Duchamp called it the "art of the retina", which he had been countering since 1912 with a technically exact art, the "peinture de précision". The latter, freed of superficial emotions and pseudo-sensitive arbitrariness, had to relate to religion, philosophy, and ethics. After World War II, "the dark inside" – the term used by Via Lewandowsky to characterize his artistic issues during our conversation in New York on 2/13/92 – things darkly repressed, sinking to invisible and unconscious strata, no longer had to necessarily be devoured by the body; at best, it seeped outside, neatly limited, in the form of symptoms, which seemed to cluster on the periphery of the physical shell.

Today, the notion of art, as revolutionized by Duchamp, has also been taken up in Berlin, which is no longer subject to the dictates of the hermeneutics of division. Nor does it matter whether the young artists are acquainted with Duchamp's concept or whether it is first seen anew through them. They deal with perception very differently than the vehement artists, for whom the grandiloquence of representation was in itself a guarantee of reality. These young artists demonstrate that "reality" is a construction based on perception, in a sensorimotoric sense: the German word for "perceive" is "wahrnehmen" – literally: "take true", and German verbs like "begreifen" ("grasp, understand") indicate a sensory process of perception. If the depiction of reality fails, then the lack of comprehension indicates a sensory rather than a motory condition: "ver-hören, ver-sprechen, ver-sehen" – literally: "mis-hear, mis-speak, over-look"⁸. This projection of activity of one's own body parts – the hand on "perception" ("Wahr-nehmen" = "truth-taking") and "grasping" ("Begreifen"), the leg on "under-standing" ("Ver-stehen") – contains the consciousness of the radical subjectivity of every gaze at things. This thesis that anything we perceive is changed by motion was developed by Henri Poincaré in

the late nineteenth century to explain the possibility of experiencing three-dimensional space. The insights of this mathematician and physicist are the foundation for Duchamp's parascientific analytic art. The narrow space of Berlin may have prevented the motoric component in the etymology of "Wahr-nehmung" (= perception, literally "truth-taking") and thus prevented an analysis of the phenomenon from gaining ground.

In her installation, *Several Meaning-Balls (Ground Plan & Settlement for Perceptive Hermits*, 1992 (rep. p.51), E. (TWIN) GABRIEL conceives of eyes as spherical industrial lamps that are illuminated from the inside, their irises reflecting the linear structure of objects such as corn cobs or the X-ray photo like pictogram of a hand (rep. p. 50); these eyeballs appear to have incorporated both what is seen and the physiology of seeing. The "truth-taking" (i.e., perception) is internalized; what is seen – as a product of perception – fuses unrecognizably with the apparatus on the shining hollow body. On the other hand, the organ on which human beings are most dependent shows no trace of a permanent inscription that is accessible to memory. For this ocular holds on to nothing. Although bright and shimmering, it is nevertheless blind. At the same time – albeit only from the back, which, irritatingly enough, one sees as a white circle, the projection of the sphere in the plane – the eyes have serially numbered names that sound both Biblical and Teutonic. There is nothing intimate about these names, although they have a "tribal membership" that globally evokes the phantom of history. Here, however, they become names of one-eyed figures who have no "contemplation" and no "grasp" of the third dimension and therefore have a different "grasp" of any spatial "truth-taking" (perception). The constantly re-orienting gaze does not turn them into "subjects", they obtain an identity from the writing-down of a name, an appellation – perhaps baptism. e. (Twin) Gabriel subtly varies the most disparate projections of the ocular dimension, the linguistic, written, naming ones. A fictitious standard runs through them: "This is the age of individuals with a variable geometry", as Jean Baudrillard says. The nineteen-nineties are not fulfilling Duchamp's 1912 demand for a technological draftsmanship for a modern description of conditions; rather, they correspond to the precision of the computer, which generates the initially immaterial images, translating them into the most diverse (art) media by means of the devices that are plugged into the interfaces. The computer gathers the artistic work from the very outset, not unlike Marcel Duchamp's *The Box in a Valise*; which looks like a laptop and presents a practical, reduced compilation of his œuvre – the portable pocket

museum, art storage. It also includes the results of his search for an "optique de précision": in the form of machines, Duchamp offered optical and eye-physiological phenomena that clarified the irreconcilable opposition of viewer and viewed.

In 1943, in New York, Duchamp, Joseph Cornell, and Yves Tanguy mounted a show entitled *THROUGH THE BIG END OF THE OPERA GLASS*. It already contained the themes of the gaze and the artificial organ. Since the mid-eighties, RAIMUND KUMMER has created several pieces on these motifs – for instance, with "genuine" glass eyes, small artworks that integrate their artistic craft into the function of simulating an eye as authentically as possible. In other sculptures, he resorts to an opera glass, taking it completely apart, then gigantically enlarging it and casting it in aluminum or, in the form of an example from his rich collection, merging it into a museum context. He thereby depicts the insight that the act of mechanically extending the eyes brings art closer, though at the price of fragmentation, but cannot replace the lost vision. When the apparatus is used from the back, as in Duchamp's 1943 work, the irony becomes perfect: with sharply etched details, art and, with it, so-called reality move unattainably away.

Status quo, a 1989 sculpture, offers the control center of the sensory stimulations, the brain, in the form of a spot, crosscut with shadowy likenesses, fleeting sensory impressions, which, already eluding current memory, have nevertheless inscribed their permanent traces in the memory: a transparent slide film behind glass appears on a pseudosacred wooden stand coated with silver leaf. It is merely the idea of the brain, which, despite its "defectiveness", once constituted the center of human intelligence and will eventually be replaced by something artificial. The nineties are the decade of the brain – more precisely, of brain research.⁹ For over twenty years now, scientists have been delving into thought as an electric phenomenon and have been trying to use the intelligence of the computer as an internal prosthesis – either a "tranquilizing" implant or a possible addition of knowledge: a mini-chip in the form of a small silicon plate for a foreign language, another one for fractional geometry ... The closer the "image projections" get to the body, the more questionable the relationship of viewer and viewed. If monitor and retina short-circuit, if image and eye actually converge in computer-driven mini-screens, super-light water-crystals to be worn like contact lenses, then an endless feedback loop emerges, a Moebius strip. For paradoxically, the tele-image always remains at a distance that the body cannot conquer.

THOMAS FLORSCHUETZ'S photo works likewise revolve

around the issue of the distance between image and viewer, although in a different sense. He, the "cameraman", always focuses his camera on himself, and the lens cuts him to bits, distorting, even deforming him, while he cannot see himself since he is photographically in charge of this dissolution of the shape of his body. In this process, the camera seems joined to the body – it too becomes a kind of artificial organ, producing duplications of the images and manifestations of the body, in which subject and object coincide. What the viewer thinks he recognizes is an indefinite skin surface, which shows all signs of the body, but without permitting any body part to be anatomically named. The "disgusting", "malformed" body shapes usually stand out ghastly pale against a monochrome background, and their bodiless presence, and our first impression of them is one of obscenity:

"Every image, every form, every body part seen up close is a genital. There is something sexual about the promiscuity of details and the magnification caused by the zoom."¹⁰

In Florschuetz's photo pieces, it is not so much the body that appears desirable as the intimacy of the technique that creates the great artificiality of the detail. The limits of the naked human body are expanded so greatly by "unnatural" enlargement that the fragment constituted by the photographic effigy quite literally blows up the traditional, neatly outlined body image. In these terms, I also regard Florschuetz's photo works as a commentary on the official, figurative painting of the former East German state. (Thomas Florschuetz has been living in West Berlin since 1988.)

The element in Florschuetz that at least recalls the "old familiar" body, recalls what could be considered the smallest common human denominator, is, genetically speaking, an endless duplication of information, which, in turn, carries the DNA double helix, present as a miniature prosthesis in every single cell – the human being as a fractal "subject".

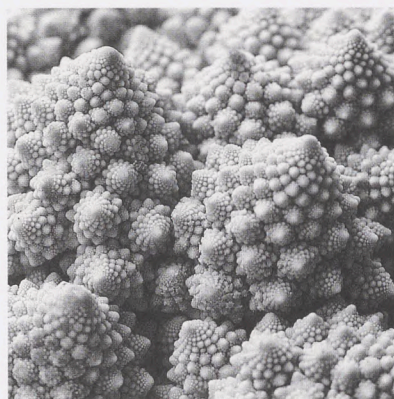
At first sight, GEORG ZEY's sculptures and objects seem to have nothing whatsoever to do with these considerations. He makes his wall and floor objects and sculptures out of ready-made products, often playfully shimmering worthless material such as marbles or magnifying glasses (rep. p. 76, p. 78). These sculptures seem formally so perfect, yet also alien and peculiar. They recall molecular structures, biochemical elements. An ironic breaking of the earnestness that would be required by dealing with the building blocks of any life is to be found in the showy cheapness of the material with which Zey works against nature as a value per se. He plays with the

fascination emanating from the beauty of the formal canon in the invisible micro-realm. The elements always settle around a hollow space, forming a pervious membrane between inside and outside, which enter into an osmotic relationship. At first blush, one might mistake the woven or pasted "net" for a proliferating endless structure. At second viewing, Zey's objects prove to be sharply outlined, mathematically precise forms. They are fractal objects, containing all the information that designates the object, crammed into the tiniest detail. There is a dubious, even cynical touch to this formula when Zey, for instance, shows his greatly enlarged photograph of a cauliflower created by gene technology: its aesthetic appeal lies in the perfectly regular repetition of one and the same structure (rep.4). However, the man-made food looks downright unpalatable. Common to both these artists and their so different-looking works, which are displayed in one room, is the pondering of the fractal. Homo sapiens, the fractal subject who, by deploying all externalized body technologies in the guise of prostheses, strives to duplicate himself endlessly and to assimilate to his own fractions, and the fractal objects that are created and structured according to mathematical, genetic, and molecular-biological forms.

Even if the present-day communication aesthetics lies beyond the Gutenberg Galaxy, a part of every communication still materializes according to the rules of a grammar. Language becomes visual in script and image, it is legible or audible. It basically has a tension-fraught representational bond with reality, which seems to be exclusively registered in objects. ERAN SCHAERF, with his works, opens up an art space that lies beyond the body as the "last bastion of authentic experience" (Else Gabriel). He enters this seemingly simple, yet abruptly sinister field of the difference between word, object, and memory – three essential components of what is called culture. Some twenty years ago, in 1972, Marcel Broodthaers said:

"Under these circumstances, is culture still important? In my opinion, the answer is yes, especially when it places thought within a frame of reference that can help the individual protect himself against the images and texts communicated by mass media and advertising, which shape our codes of behaviour and our ideology."¹¹

Schaerf's installations are conceptual, they are very poetic in regard to the sensuality of found items, fragile and light materials, and his preference for clear colors. They are related to the medium of photography, in which, during the instant of the "take", things that are in reality incompatible and completely separated are put on the same level. Like photographs, his installations reveal their history only to the viewer who feels reminded. His regis-



4 Genetically engineered cauliflower, 1991

trations aim at those features of the medium, which is considered realistic, even true. Like Magritte, he takes off from familiar and intimate things that are not bizarre.

"However, the intimate things are combined or reshaped in such a way that upon seeing them, we are bound to think that something different, something non-intimate exists, which appears to us with the intimate things."¹²

That is why Schaerf's pieces often involve photos, even the deceptive in-difference of photos of the original and photos of the photo; or else his objects emerge through various photographic repro-processes, including worthless photocopies. *a b c society*, for example, contains a *rose canister* as one of eighteen parts. It is modeled on a familiar heirloom of the nineteen-fifties, a round tea or coffee canister printed with a rose pattern. The artist has photographed this canister in such a way that, in adherence to the representational laws of classical perspective, an oval stands for its capacity on the flat surface. Schaerf then copies this illusion of the three-dimensional on a transparent surface, on translucent paper, thereby forming an oval receptacle with a lid but without a bottom, and held together only by two paper clips. The canister loses its function in the projection of its far more real effigy. When the latter is unrolled, it turns back into a piece of paper on which the imperishable roses, together with their "support", the canister, are inscribed like a word. All meanings in regard to reality have shifted, only the roses, stylized, fictitious, have remained what they have always been: an effigy. Thus, Schaerf's object transformations always revolve around the question of what objects transport and what words transport and what memory is carried by. For the polyvalence of the visible signs bewitches the viewer, who, in quest of one meaning for the multipartite ensemble in the enigmatically spun net of associations,

suddenly becomes aware of the knot of the ineffable. Schaerf issues instructions that occupy the (exhibition) space like words, which is why the hanging of the work constitutes an artistic medium in its own right. Along with the intellectual possibilities, it also shows the ponderable, perceivable, and therefore visible possibilities that artists, in the course of art/history, have developed as their instrumentarium, the "sparkling knowledge of the art of the nineties". (This alludes to Michel Foucault's statement about Paul Klee and Vasily Kandinsky: by visually deploying all the gestures, actions, graphic signs, lines, sketches, and surfaces that make up painting, they turned the sheer act of painting into the exposed and sparkling knowledge of painting.¹³) There is something labyrinthal about Schaerf's objects in the manifold variation of language as script, script as image, image as space, etc. The fragmentary, associative logic of his narratives will never make sense. Yet meaning can be found in the elements, the supports, the stands, the materials, and especially the perspective – for instance when Schaerf restores to reality the law of the perspective diminution and reduction of objects in the pictorial depth. As a result, the viewers, from their assigned viewpoint, can no longer tell whether the perspective distortion is real or if they are merely perceiving it in terms of their common experience that everything looks smaller in the distance. Or else the use of isometry, which subverts our habitual orientation in space....These artistic strategies are based on the question of whether we can trust our senses. Their themes are all the implications that fundamentally involve any agreement on so-called reality in regard to its communication systems. Just as one recognizes the same words in different sentences, Schaerf keeps reusing his objects in different installations in different contexts. Analogous to the analytical principles of repetition as well as displacement and condensation, they occupy the space of perception and show its contingency on the issues of all representation.

The artistic positions shown in *INTERFACE* are extremely diverse. But all of them thrive on the interface running through space and time. It is as if the "leap into space" and the "rip through the void" were equivalent to the final shattering of those apparent meanings. It is high time that Berlin too stopped glossing over and repressing that leap and that rip. This is the rip that goes through every artist who does not adhere to an "ordered" art.

Translated by Joachim Neugroschel

NOTES

1. Maurice Blanchot: "Le mot *corps*", in: *L'ÉCRITURE DU DÉSASTRE*, Paris, 1980, p. 77.
2. Michel Sanouillet, ed. with Elmer Peterson: *THE WRITINGS OF MARCEL DUCHAMP*, London, 1973, p. 130.
3. Pierre Cabanne: *DIALOGUES WITH MARCEL DUCHAMP*, New York, 1971, p. 7.
4. Günter Meissner: *FRANZ MARC, BRIEFE, SCHRIFTEN UND AUFZEICHNUNGEN*, Leipzig, 1989, p. 225.
5. See note 4, p. 258.
6. Paul Virilio: *ESTHÉTIQUE DE LA DISPARITION*, Paris, 1980, p. 60.
7. Paul Virilio, op. cit., p. 61.
8. Cf. Heinz von Foerster: "Wahrnehmen", in: *PHILOSOPHIEN DER NEUEN TECHNOLOGIE, ARS ELECTRONICA*, BERLIN, 1989, pp. 35.
9. *FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG*, 3/23/92, p. 34.
10. Jean Baudrillard: "Videowelt und fraktales Subjekt", authorized German translation for the Symposium on Philosophies of the New Technology, 9/14/88, in Linz, Austria; see also note 8, op. cit., p. 116.
11. Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, ed.: *BROODTHAERS, WRITINGS, INTERVIEWS, PHOTOGRAPHS*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology and October Magazine, 1987, p. 145.
12. André Blavier: *RENÉ MAGRITTE, ECRITS COMPLETS*, Paris, 1978, no. 117.
13. Cf. Walter Seitter: "Michel Foucault und die Malerei", in: *M.F. (CECI N'EST PAS UNE PIPE) DIES IST KEINE PFEIFE*, Frankfurt am Main-Berlin-Vienna, 1983, p. 64.

**Interfaces in the Vacuum of the Modern Era
Art Between Nowhere City L.A. and No Man's Land Berlin**

Narcissus doesn't long for art.
Georg Steiner

EVERYTHING IS BEAUTIFUL

Nowadays, the chocolate ice cream at the German supermarket around the corner is called Les Authentiques; presented in gold foil, it adorns itself with a line from Baudelaire: *Comme sous le noir présent transperce le délicieux passé* – As the delicious past seeps through the black present. In these postmodern times, advertising operates in a virtuoso brinkmanship between shadow and substance – that razor's edge that used to be the domain of artists. Andy Warhol knows that "Everything is beautiful!" The goal that Communism vainly tried to force – "here in America it comes about all by itself ... Everyone looks the same, acts the same, and we keep making more and more progress along this road."¹ "Everything is art and nothing is art. Because I think everything is beautiful."²

On the other hand, the average American believes he can still recognize a "real face" in that "long European face with its high cheekbones" – a face molded by history, ethics, and a specific way of looking at the world. The American psychologist Stuart Miller ascribes this wide variety of European faces to the diverse range of the European intellect, in contrast to America's "intellectual conformity" which was criticized by Alexis de Tocqueville, when he traveled through America in 1831-32.³ But now, the defiant citadel of the European personality cult is tottering. While the rhythm of modern societal life demands more and more flexibility of character, the "depths" of the European cultural traditions are flattening out. We are on the defensive: Europeans are reacting to the Americanizing of the old world with "arrogance and secrecy". Stuart Miller's prognosis: "The faces of old-time Europeans are going to vanish. We have to be prepared to see more faceless Europeans".⁴

Are we all Americans? If we do some family-tree research among our kinfolk overseas, the interfaces between Nowhere City, L.A., and No Man's Land, Berlin, will become visible in the vacuum of the modern era.

RESTLESS COLONISTS

Stubbornly evoking the decline of the West, both conservative and Socialist social critics kept railing against

American liberalism and its culture industry. But despite their polemics, American culture is nothing but a distorted mirror image, a parody or travesty of European civilization; and the prototype of the "faceless American" is merely the final product of colonizers and mobile European businessmen as agents and reconnoiterers of capitalism. Restlessness, mobility, weak ties to things and persons are features of the modern era, as personified in explorers and conquistadors like Christopher Columbus.

In his psychohistorical study *Go West*,⁵ Gert Raethel demonstrates that the typical emigrant tends to have an "object-weak" character: as a rule, his childhood was marked by an early separation from mother and father or by a "puritanical" upbringing oriented toward aloofness. He compensates for his separation anxieties by avoiding any all-too-close relations with people or things. Feeling no excessive pain or grief, he is more willing to give up his home, homeland, and native soil than are the sedentary "object-strong" types.

IN SEARCH OF LIBERTY

For all those who wanted and had to flee authoritarian ties and dependencies, America became the distantly shining symbol and epitome of freedom. The maternal goddess of liberty, holding her torch of freedom in New York Harbor, beseeches the rest of the world: "... Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free". She embodies typical American self-assurance: "We are the pioneers of the world ... Mankind expects great things of us ... We are the vanguard marching through the unexplored wilderness".⁶

In July 1943, shortly before the Allied landing in Sicily, when the offspring of European immigrants were about to liberate Europe and convert it to the ideals of the American way of life, General George Patton, the supreme commander of the Allied landing troops, appealed to his soldiers – many of them from Italian or German backgrounds: "These ancestors of your so loved freedom that they gave up home and country to cross the ocean in search of liberty. (But those whom) it is our honor and privilege to attack and to destroy ... lacked the courage to make such a sacrifice and therefore remained slaves".⁷

The endless vastness and emptiness of the North American continent with its seemingly boundless space offered the object-weak character a chance to be independent in terms of not hanging on to someone or something. Here he managed and needed to be constantly on the move in his covered wagon, here adventure lurked behind every shrub, here he was entirely on his own in a moment of danger. The myth of the Western shows us this daily an-

nihilatory fight with the natives, shows the lonely hero as a restless wanderer who stays nowhere, who has to keep going through untouched "Virgin Land". He loves the thrill of pleasurable fear, the vast prospects and perspectives. According to Frederick Jackson Turner,⁹ the American is the result of how the European immigrant was molded by the wilderness. In the struggle against Indians and untamed nature, the frontier prototype developed his characteristics: "individual initiative, inventiveness, and a fighting belligerence."¹⁰

Everything in this country is geared to mobility: the movies, the conveyor belt, the trailer camps and mobile homes, whole families living on the Los Angeles Freeway.

THE NATURAL PARADISE

The immigrant landing in the New World saw himself as a new Adam, transforming the virgin soil into a new Garden of Eden. In De Tocqueville's eyes, the trek from East to West had "the solemnity of a providential event" (1833).¹¹ Adam and Eve's fall from grace, with all its consequences and historical turbulences, seemed annulled by America's paradise regained. Thus, in 1976, when New York's Museum of Modern Art put on an exhibition of American painting from 1800 to 1950, the curators titled it *The Natural Paradise*. Its motto was a quotation from John Locke: "In the beginning, all the world was America".

With their American pragmatism, the settlers began to make their concrete notions of happiness come true. Needing no heaven, they replaced the Bible with the Book of Nature. For the Californians, according to Joan Didion, the past found its "deserved happy end" when the first covered wagons arrived in the fruitful plains beyond the mountains on the West Coast.¹² But now, California is ruled by "the despair of people who incessantly get what they want: a feverish fulfillment of all wishes and a soothing of their anxieties".¹³

UTOPIA AND MORALITY

Just as Eastern Europe had a real Socialism, which has meanwhile collapsed like a house of cards, America has a real Utopia. The Eastern and the Western Utopia share the claim of creating a new world order through revolution. However, they fundamentally diverge in their ideologies: scientific vs. quasi – "natural" materialism. European art and philosophy, in contrast, are marked by the unbridgeable gap between pessimistic historical experience and a hope for salvation. In old Europe, Utopia, consistent with its etymology (u-top-ia = no-place), is a no-place.

Jean Baudrillard, in his book on America, formulates the paradox of a real Utopia in America compared with the

European mentality: "The principle of the realized Utopia explains the absence and beyond that the uselessness of metaphysics and imagination in American life. It gives Americans a perception of reality that is different from ours. The real is not coupled with the impossible, no failure can challenge it. Anything that is thought in Europe comes true in America ... America is neither a dream or a reality, it is hyperreality ... That was why the hyperrealists could paint quite naively without irony nor protest ... That was why Pop Art could so easily transfer the astonishing banality of consumer goods to its canvases ... It is fascinating to see the way all aesthetic and noble values dissolve into kitsch and hyperreality ... Between geraniums and eucalyptuses ... we find the doom of Utopia come true. The same question keeps being raised in the heart of wealth and liberation: 'What are you doing after the orgy?' What is left when everything has become available?"¹⁴

However, the real Utopia and the feasible future – America's basic law – are in constant jeopardy and must therefore be defended. America nurtures a panicky hope for "the continuation and constancy of the realized Utopia" (Baudrillard). In the nineteen-thirties, the time of the Great Depression, painters like Grant Wood and Thomas Hart Benton called themselves "Regionalists": in their agrarian romanticism, their pictures conjured up the Mid-western farmer of the vast plains as the unadulterated embodiment of the "ideals of freedom and opportunity ... The future of the republic is in his hands" (F.J. Turner, 1893).¹⁵

In the "fatherless society", the weak, narcissistically disturbed ego, seems liberated from all punitive, authoritarian superiors; but it is not self-sufficient. The American lack of authoritarian structures is made up for by a society of pedagogues: social workers, therapists, company psychologists, TV evangelists, and animators, who function as parents for the lonely, unattached ego without its noticing. The inner void is compensated for by a childlike consumerism and the idols created by Hollywood, the dream factory. The disturbed self-love requires non-stop confirmation by forced object relations such as quickly formed friendships that usually remain shallow. The earthly paradise challenges itself with a strange fatalism that can only be hinted at with such labels as world-wide extravagance and a throw-away mentality. "In America, things still live from Utopia and morality, from concrete notions of happiness and ways of life ... If America were to lose this moral perspective on itself, it would crumble" (Baudrillard).

The neo-conservative custodians of American virtues, in the wake of the Daughters of the American Revolution, are all the more rigid and puritanical in hurling charges of blasphemy and pornography at the artists who deal with

the Great American Lie and its compensatory prudishness. "These artists are messengers with a dreadful tidings. We would rather kill the messengers than worry about their message" (Rachel Rosenthal, Los Angeles performance artist).¹⁶ When a Robert Mapplethorpe exhibition opened in Cincinnati, Ohio during the summer of 1990, the local police chief brought charges against Dennis Barrie, Director of the Contemporary Arts Center, for circulating indecent pictures.¹⁷ Republican congressman Henry Hyde speaks openly about a "cultural war" against the decline of American values. One issue is the substance of the union's political goal, "the pursuit of happiness", as penned by Thomas Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence; a further issue is the salvation of misleading conceptual fetishes that suggest security and simplicity, such as "home" and "home town". America's Main Street still lashes back when it feels that some arrogant artists and intellectuals have literally gone over its head. The same applies to the German and French provinces, except that Middle America thoroughly dominates public opinion. That is where America's self-perception is to be found: "A town with less than a thousand inhabitants ... Its main street is the extension of the highway from everywhere ... (It) is the peak of civilization ... Whatever Ezra doesn't know and doesn't approve of is heresy, not worth knowing and sinful to think about".¹⁸

Like the prudish sunshine state of the German Democratic Republic, which, by outlawing melancholy and campaigning against "degenerate art" and "pessimism about history", drilled its citizens in optimism and progress, America, regards sex and death as obscene. During his primary campaign, President Bush fired John Frohn-mayer, chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, as a sop for conservative Southern voters. The American art scene was supposed to think about "what is universally considered the best, has stood the test of time, and is consented to and acceptable throughout the land".¹⁹

In 1991, at the Los Angeles County Museum, Stephanie Barron reconstructed the 1937 Munich exhibition of *Degenerate Art*: she then pointed out "unpleasant parallels ... between the people attacking artistic freedom in America today and those who organized the exhibition of *Degenerate Art* in the Nazi era (op. cit.).

An anecdote recorded in the mid-nineteenth century by Charles Baudelaire, the artist of modern life in Paris, reads like a topical commentary on this situation: "All these bourgeois blabbers, who unabatingly mouth words like 'immoral, immorality, the moral effect of art', and similar claptrap, remind me of Louise Villedieu, a two-bit whore, who once accompanied me to the Louvre, which

she had never visited before. She kept blushing, covering her face with her hands, tugging at my sleeve every moment, and asking me, in front of the immortal paintings and statues, how anyone could publicly exhibit such indecent things".²⁰

In 1878, ten years after Baudelaire's death, when Mark Twain was touring Europe, he was shocked at the sight of Titian's *Venus* at the Uffizi in Florence: "One can feast one's eyes unhindered on the filthiest, most common, most obscene painting that the world possesses Without question, this painting was painted for a bordello, and it was probably turned down there because it was a little too strong Titian's *Venus* soils and shames the Tribune".²¹

BERLIN – AMERICA AS A MICROCOSM?²²

In America the modern age has established itself uncompromisingly as a society that lives "in permanent nowness", with no past in which to reflect itself. In contrast with that "original edition", Europe has always remained a second version with all the resulting paradoxes and non-simultaneities. Germany, the belated nation, is an outstanding European example of the half-hearted adoption of modernity. From Bismarck's founding of the German Empire in 1871 to the beginning of the Third Reich in 1933, Berlin was the lonesome outpost, the bridgehead of the modern era. This city is an "entity that, so to speak, is always becoming and never is" (Ernst Bloch, 1932). As an "urban absolute", as the "perfect state of urbanity", it was an unreconcilable antithesis to the provinces, where the towns, as regional centers, represented the economy, culture, and religion of the surrounding countryside.

Berlin, on the other hand, "a place destined to dissolve and shatter any tradition ... revolutionary and always ready for any change" (Carl Einstein), became the epitome of the nemesis to all anti-modernists, who associated this metropolis with their fears of uprooting, alienation, anonymity, aloofness, coldness, and indifference as the characteristics of urban life. The conservative cultural historians operated with a typically German polarization: *Zivilisation* as the merely useful, utilitarian, superficial, and *Kultur* as the intellectual and spiritual, the creative and the nationally specific.²³ (Overall, the German word *Kultur* corresponds more to the English word civilization.) For those critics, the disenchanting world, administered and systematized by specialists, was the graveyard of individuality and originality.

Around the turn of the century, the French journalist Jules Huret saw Berlin as newer than any American city, newer than Chicago – the only city in the world to which it

can be likened in terms of the incredible speed of its development".²⁴ Huret depicts the inhabitants as enterprising, strongwilled, hungry for booty and freedom – "Yankee-like" colonists in the Wild East, whom he compares to immigrants in America.

In 1935, the German philosopher Ernst Bloch called this "most Americanized city in Europe"²⁵ "a vacuum created by the collapse of bourgeois culture". The mobile city profited from this. "This place first inhaled some fresh air again ... Berlin seems ... extraordinarily 'simultaneous' – an ever-new city, built hollow, and on which not even the lime becomes or is truly solid".²⁶ Berlin navigates in the "ocean of up-to-dateness".

DRAFT

In the icy air of modernism during the early nineteen-twenties, artists flitted about like will-o'-the-wisps, yanked to and fro between skepticism and faith. Should they risk the ride across Lake Constance, appropriate Immanuel Kant's maxim that only a life that does not shrink back from the coldness of the world, but "instead endures it and survives in it ... (is) a life in the spirit of progress"? As an "intellectual nomad" (Oswald Spengler), a flaneur, a voyeur, the "artist of modern life", with his cold, diagnostic gaze, occupies a sober, impartial observation post in the labyrinth of modernity. To prevent development from overtaking him or riding roughshod over him, he knows that "one must be absolutely modern" (Arthur Rimbaud), forever alert and forever mobile.

Andy Warhol's indifference, his retreat into the aloofness of the voyeur, who coldly and impartially observes the madding of the crowd, was summed up in his idea "that everyone should be a machine I would like to be a machine".²⁷ His attitude had already been formulated by Charles Baudelaire as the experience of "modern life" in Paris, the capital of the modern era in the nineteenth century. The new prototype of the jobless artist, free of his social obligations, is the flaneur: "For the perfect flaneur, for the passionate observer, it is a tremendous job to reside in the throng, in the surging, the moving, the fleeting and the infinite".²⁸

For Baudelaire, modernity was the epitome of transience, vanishing, and randomness. Cold, artificial beauty, the "beauty of indifference" cultivated by Marcel Duchamp and Andy Warhol, was aimed at hidebound bourgeois utilitarianism. Behind the mask of his sangfroid and impassivity (toward himself and toward others), Baudelaire passionately politicized against the moral and aesthetic decline of the bourgeoisie in the wake of industrialization: "Mechanization will Americanize us so thoroughly that

even the blood-thirstiest, most nefarious, and most anti-natural of all Utopian dreams will seem innocuous next to such positive results".²⁹

Energetic and self-forgetful, the avant-gardists propagated and defended the bottomlessness of a seemingly dissolving world of things. Emptiness and transparency appeared to vanquish the *horror vacui* of the bourgeois interiors as strongholds of the self, and they promised a new, carefree sense of life. Claiming to be the radical vanguard, they presented alienation as positive – a liberation from constricting social bonds. Thus, for artists, the America of the Machine Age³⁰ became the epitome of their visions of a free society of equal opportunity, which abandoned the European system of castes and classes. The Berlin Verist, George Grosz, who Americanized his first name (from Georg), waxed hymnal: "America!!!! Future!!!!!"³¹

However, these artists, often despising their backward audience, realized too late that they were asking too much of it. They left behind a mental vacuum that others managed to fill with their ideology. "Le Corbusier's houses are neither spatial nor sculptural. Airs wafts through them! Air is their constitutive fact! All that counts is...relationship and penetration! The shells between inside and outside fall away".³² "With so much wind," Ernst Bloch dryly remarked in 1932, "the air became very thin ... At first, nothing is articulated here but emptiness ... The despiritualizing of life, the commodification of people and things is polished as if it were in order, indeed, were order itself ... A smooth face protects crooked paths".³³

In the meantime, the dream of removing the boundary between interior and exterior (between subject and object, nature and civilization, becoming visible in the bourgeois window picture) has given way to brown-tinged frosted-glass façades that reflect their environment, thus casting back their own image: "They are more invulnerable than any stone wall. Just like the people with black glasses Everywhere, the transparency of the interface finds an end in the internal refraction Everything that is grandiloquently called communication and interaction eventually winds up in the retreat of the monad into the shadow of its own formula, into its self-administrated niche and artificial immunity". (Baudrillard)

In the American "culture of narcissism",³⁴ the flaneur becomes the object-weak voyeur, who takes pleasure in being separated from his object of desire through the store window. In the pure visual culture of surfaces, coupled with fear of touching and a phobia about germs, the body vanishes into special institutions for body contact and kitchen pots, "in which the water never touches the ground ... just as bodies in feeling ... never touch for even

an instant. This is known as an *interface* ..." (Baudrillard).

MYSTICS AND TECHNICIANS OF IDEAS

At the start of the twentieth century, German artists, challenging positivistic science and materialism, produced a very different brand of art. The modern art of Naturalism (split-second style, precise observation) and empirically ordered Impressionism were regarded as "pseudo-arts" turned into science. Now an anti-modern art was demanded to overcome materialism, transcend it, and reach the spiritual and the cosmic. The response was Expressionism, which subliminally conveyed the tiding of a national self-discovery. A vitalistic atmosphere of departure, opposing the boredom of the *juste milieu*, had taken hold of German art prior to World War I. The rejection of anything foreign combined with the search for the German essence in Gothic art and the late medieval paintings of Matthias Grünewald. "It was a shriek, a shriek of the soul that had to find its way back home, home to the source of the living, to the creative divinity."³⁵

In 1925, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (co-founder of Die Brücke, a group of artists in Dresden and then, as of 1910, for several years in Berlin) professed his loyalty to a "Germanic art" as "religion in the broadest sense of the word". Romance art (i.e., French and Italian) is a "copy, a depiction, a description or circumscription of nature. The German paints the 'what', the Frenchman the 'how'".³⁶

The art critic Carl Einstein was one of the few people not to be taken in by this neo-Germanic mysticism linked with the Youth Movement. In his famous book *Art of the Twentieth Century*, he committed himself chiefly to French Cubism and read the riot act to the German Expressionists (with the exception of Kirchner and Paul Klee): "They floated perhaps too much in a hazy 'world view' instead of a clear viewing."³⁷

One reason for the downfall of the Weimar Republic was the extreme polarization between right and left, cultural conservatism and modern thinking, which denounced any liberal and pragmatic mediation between the extremes; yet such a mediation was successful in America during the nineteen-thirties, despite the Great Depression. Over the long haul, the depicted extremes could not be sustained in Germany. The ecstatic singers of paeans and the cool, objective vivisectionists of society converted either to Catholicism (Georg Scholz), dogmatic Communism (Herwarth Walden, the Sturm Gallery), or mysticism (Lothar Schreyer, Bauhaus), etc. The Expressionist "agglutinations" and transparent living machines were followed by an unparalleled "Realism": "a Realism of the recomposed world, of peace with bourgeois Being ... A reprise of

classicistic calm and severity passed through the world, through that existence full of noble simplicity, quiet grandeur, in which the Capitalists live".³⁸ And starting in 1937, it filled the rooms of the Great German Art Exhibitions at the House of German Art in Munich.

Even George Grosz, the mordant Dadaist and Verist of the early nineteen-twenties, now became a very conventional painter. After moving to America at an early point, in 1932, he now railed and ranted against the "lousy 'European' griping";³⁹ he called upon his fellow Dadaists of yore to go along with his example by becoming an American, and he invited them to visit his private school and to lecture on the genesis of Dadaism. And so the Dadaist rebellion against the German petit-bourgeois ended as an American workshop.

In America, Grosz had learned down-to-earth thinking. During the Great Depression, one goal was facts: e.g., the photography of the Farm Security Administration and the Federal Writers' Project guidebooks to the American states. Another goal was the restoration of American self-confidence. Artistic flights of fancy were inappropriate. In 1932 Edmund Wilson, a literary and cultural critic who also penned reportages, appealed to his compatriots: "We have the memory of that brief period of freedom when we were independent people in a new land What we need today are technicians of ideas that are as rigorous as our practical and active ones."⁴⁰

Those words ominously recall Stalin's labeling of writers and artists as "engineers of the soul": what he meant was the type of artist who, mediating between reality and Utopia, produces an art that can concretely show that Utopia is feasible!

In the memory of America as a Utopia, in the reliance on its constancy, and in the pragmatic dislike of "serried ranks", we may find an explanation for why America resisted Fascism. The Regionalists, sympathizing with a reactionary isolationism, wanted to make the Midwestern landscape the symbol of America's national character; indeed, their paintings recall the contemporary works of Nazi artists, like Werner Peiner, who found the timeless symbol of the German essence in the clod of soil. However, the Regionalists were sharply contradicted in 1935 – for instance, by the Social Realists in their journal *Art Front*.⁴¹

MYTH AND TERROR

Berlin was surrounded by the rest of the Reich, and these provinces with their "panicky ties" made a stand against the republic. "This secret Germany is a gigantic, a boiling receptacle of the past; it pours from the country toward the city ... it is capable of any terrorism."⁴² One

year after that prognosis, the Nazi provinces had conquered the hated "seat of civilization" (German novelist Heinrich Mann), the whore of Babylon. The asphalt jungle was uprooted to make way for "Germania, the capital of the world", at the center of a system of coordinates that would dominate Europe. Precisely because Berlin did not lie in the shadow of a cathedral, the city-dweller, left entirely to his own devices, "all the more resolutely needed order and military discipline" – according to Helene Nostiz in 1938.⁴³ However, for the Nazis, "discipline" did not mean Prussian bearing and rigor; in reaching back to the racial theories of the waning nineteenth century, it referred to the biological breeding and selecting of a "pure" Aryan Germanic race through the extermination of "impure" races. The unique symbiosis between German and Jewish culture in the Berlin of the nineteen-twenties was terminated by the Nazi persecution of the Jews (of Germany's half million Jews, one third fled abroad, one third were killed, and one third mangled to survive either in the camps or in Germany itself). Variety was to be replaced by the simplicity of functional, metal-hardened centuries as described by Aldous Huxley in *Brave New World*, which, in its German translation published in 1932, was, characteristically enough, set in Berlin.

Faced with the exorbitant demands of "civilization", the Germans fantasized about a day-before-yesterday and a day-after-tomorrow.⁴⁴ They believed they could overcome the abolition of traditional ties by fleeing into a new myth of origin: the Reich. The "lonely crowd"⁴⁵ expected an authoritarian Führer as a "super-father" to violently mold them into a peoplehood, thereby restoring their lost harmony and security. The success of this usurpation by the masses was due to the specifically German "convergence of archaistic myths and the most modern methods".⁴⁶ Behind the façade of rhetoric about homeland and peoplehood, the Nazi regime put Germany through a second process of modernizing and streamlining.

The reactionary nationalists believed that the German civilian, "weakened internally and hollowed out by war-time starvation and then inflation, had become a human 'vacuum',⁴⁷ waiting only for a new bearer of the idea of the Reich. The unfulfilled national yearnings, nourished by numerous mythical tales, were anxious to achieve political realization. The idea of the Reich, embodied in Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, who, according to German legend, is still waiting in Kyffhäuser to make his comeback, was already outmoded in the Middle Ages because of the development of Western European nation-states and now existed only as an eschatological fiction. The Nazis took advantage of those desires to inflict their *Götterdämmerung*

on the rest of the world, ultimately perishing in their death mania. In 1940, Adolf Hitler had attended Bayreuth's last performance of *Götterdämmerung*, the fourth part of Richard Wagner's operatic cycle, *The Ring of the Nibelungs*. After the final victory, they planned to stage *Parsifal*, Wagner's drama of salvation about the Holy Grail. And in 1943, at Berlin's Sports Palace, Hermann Göring compared the destruction of Germany's Sixth Army at Stalingrad to the destruction of the Nibelungs in Etzel's (Attila's) castle.

The philosopher Martin Heidegger justified Western Man's heroic fight to the finish against Western Modernism, which was forgetful of Being. In 1942, shortly before the Battle of Stalingrad, he stated ex cathedra, on the basis of his fundamental ontology: "We know today that the Anglo-Saxon world of Americanism is determined to annihilate Europe, that is, the homeland, that is, the beginning of Western civilization America's entry into this planetary war is not an entry into history, it is already the final American act of American history-lessness and self-devastation The concealed spirit of the beginning in the West will not even vouchsafe a look of scorn at this process of the self-devastation of that which has no beginning; it will merely wait in the calm of the peace of the beginning for its historic moment."⁴⁸ The Allies forestalled this historic moment with a different one.

TABULA RASA

The "bulwark of the republic", dismantled by the "Nazi provinces" and reconstructed as the center of terrorism, was turned into a scapegoat, as was the German Democratic Republic: they had to foot the pan-German bill for the failed history of Bismarck's Prussian nation-state. During the nineteen-fifties, the "West German America" experienced an "economic miracle", soon developing into one of the richest industrial countries in the world; Berlin, in contrast, became a subsidized branch of the "temporary" provincial capital, Bonn. A disoriented West German society could not afford to look back; accompanied by the dire Cassandra cries of cultural critics, it parroted the American way of life: "Throughout the entire world, including the Communist countries, there is probably only one binding model of civilization: America; but our way of Americanizing ourselves has gone furthest and deepest."⁴⁹

With the failure of German history, the citizens of the Federal Republic were all too willing to make a tabula rasa and to "overcome" their past once and for all. A new start was to be attempted, by-gones – like uniforms, gas masks, and buckets – were to be put aside and hidden away, or else given new functions.

THE VACUUM OF HISTORY

In Berlin and East Germany, the scars and traces of the failure of German history could not be overlooked. Except that in those places, people could experience almost physically the presence of a history that refused to go away. In 1961, the year the Wall was built, the German novelist Wolfdietrich Schnurre wrote: "My goodness, we're not walking along the ocean floor, we're walking straight across Berlin. An agonizingly illuminated wasteland behind the Wall ... the black, gorgelike subway shafts with locked gates No, nothing can be seen beyond the nocturnal Wall here on Potsdam Square, only that huge, inhuman, lunar void."⁵⁰

Berlin was out of commission, like the huge stations, the terminals of a rail system that had once made the metropolis, like a spider in its web, the transportation core of Central Europe.

In 1979, Raffael Rheinsberg plunged straight into this vacuum of history. Michael Haerdter, director of the Bethanien Artists' House, where Rheinsberg resided on a grant from the Schleswig-Holstein government, reports that the guest spent his first night in Berlin in a no man's land – the deserted terrain of the quondam Anhalt Station, which, that same year, became the "scene of the crime" for his first work in Berlin: *Anhalt Station, Ruin or Temple*.⁵¹ Built during the early eighteen-seventies, in an economic heyday of Berlin, the station, still grandiose as a ruin, was torn down in 1960. Then, in 1987, for the celebration of Berlin's seven-hundred-fiftieth birthday, this was the scene of the last staging of *The Myth of Berlin*. Rheinsberg combed the site, looking for ordinary traces of past and present uses (screws, insulators, signs), which he mounted as witnesses of violence and destruction in a simple tableaux of remembrance. Rheinsberg then turned to other "guilty" places in the city, such as the embassies that the Nazi government had set up for their allies on the edge of the Tiergarten. On these sites, which had been abandoned since 1945, Rheinsberg exhumed the buried and repressed objectifications of the past: *Embassies – Archeology of a War*, 1982 (the German noun *Botschaft* means not only "embassy", but also "news, message, tidings"). He also did an installation at what had once been Gestapo headquarters: *The Beaten Path of German History*, 1984. Like the playwright Heiner Müller, Rheinsberg tries to bare German history to the bones, "so that the decaying corpse of history will stop contaminating German life".⁵³ He found the leitmotif for this piece in Adorno/Horkheimer's *Dialectics of Enlightenment*: "The issue is not to preserve the past but to fulfill the past hope".⁵⁴

Rheinsberg, a trained molder and foundryman at a

shipyard, Howaldt Deutsche Werft, in Kiel, is contemptuous of the cult of genius and artistic posturing. He feels that an artist has the same social responsibility as a baker. His genius is that of a regained childhood curiosity, "which is not inured to any view of life".⁵⁵ Rheinsberg, who has an intimate rapport with photographs as found objects and photography as the medium of his oeuvre, works like "a sensitive, walking daguerrotype that secures the finest traces and depicts the course of things with all their changing reflections: the movement of the city".⁵⁶ He finds things intuitively, they take possession of him – a process once formulated by Franz Hessel, the Berlin flaneur of the nineteen-twenties: "We see only the things that look at us".⁵⁷

Rheinsberg steps back as an author, collector, archaeologist, anthropologist, and researcher, who, in his interviews, investigations, documentations, and archives, focuses on the objects themselves: "Rags, refuse: I don't want to inventory them, I want to let them come into their own in the only way possible: by using them".⁵⁸

The specific character of Raffael Rheinsberg's work is clarified by Roland Barthes' distinction between *studium* and *punctum*. In contrast to the interest in photographs as visual evidence of history, which Barthes labels *studium*, the *punctum* of an object emanates from the object itself "and, shooting like an arrow out of that context, it penetrates me ... The *punctum* of a photograph is its randomness, which *pierces me* (hitting me, wounding me)".⁵⁹ In regard to a specific photograph, Roland Barthes can say: "It *animates me* and I *animate it*"⁶⁰ (Latin *anima* means "soul").

Raffael Rheinsberg likewise believes that an object has a soul, because a bit of the individuality of the person who built, used, or worn it is registered in this object. By finding and perceiving things and wresting them from decay and social scorn, he makes them visible to other people. Thereby freeing them from their status as objects, he turns them into subjects, that speak to him and also to the viewer, or else to one another in the arrangements of his installations.

September 1, 1989 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the German invasion of Poland and thus the start of the Second World War. Hunting through a freight depot, Rheinsberg had found the gloves and work shoes of forced laborers in the Nazi era; and now, on this historic anniversary, he laid those items out in windrows at the Langemarck Hall. This installation, *Hand and Foot*, recalls the slave labor inflicted on the so-called "foreign workers", who had been transported here from the German-occupied areas. The battered clogs and ragged work

gloves, testifying to the sufferings of their wearers, demolish the cult of the dead at the national shrine in the bell tower of the Reich Sports Field,⁶¹ where even today wreaths still pay homage to a patriotic myth: in 1914, near Langemarck, 45,000 young volunteers sang as they sacrificed their lives for Germany. Above the signs for the units that participated in the World War I battle hung Lilli Engel's pictures as dark negatives of the destruction.

Like Christ's image on the veronica, the blood and sweat of their wearers still adheres to the clogs and gloves of the forced laborers and the felt boots of the Russian soldiers in the installation *Josef* (cf. Peter Funken, p. 64).

This gives those objects the status of relics, in which each wearer is still present as a *pars pro toto*, bearing witness to his individual existence. In this way, Rheinsberg offers a memorial in the physical, material, tangible presence of his found items: "Forgetfulness is inhuman, because accumulated suffering is forgotten; for the historical trace on things ... is always that of past suffering".⁶²

Beyond the grandiloquent effigies of and monuments to war and violence, the representation and the represented become one here. In Rheinsberg's approach, the profane character of everyday relics is sanctified. Closeness and authenticity (to quote Walter Benjamin somewhat freely) replace the aura of the beautiful devotional image: "The trace is the manifestation of a nearness – as distant as that which it left may be; the aura is the manifestation of a distance – as near as that which it evokes may be. In the trace, we get hold of the thing; in the aura, the thing takes us over".⁶³

Rheinsberg's *Omsk-Tomsk-Novosibirsk* is made up of unused, folded, oil-soaked paper bags for carrying wet sand-items he found at a Russian barracks in Potsdam (cf. p. 67). In this object collage, he reveals his ambivalent relationship to an aesthetic that creates distance. At first blush, the viewer is virtually captured by the "innocent" beauty of the subtle, minimalist aesthetics of vertical stripes and monochrome nuances. But upon taking a closer look, we see the ambivalence of the aesthetic arrangement and the crude, "unaesthetic" materiality of the "support". Message and messenger are identical. In the direct confrontation between object, image and viewer, the author as mediator steps back, allowing the object to speak for itself: "*Here I am ... Look at me. Or rather: Listen to me.* For the obligation is a mode of time far more than a mode of space".⁶⁴

CROOKED GERMAN

Raimund Kummer too is always on the move, tracking down sites and spaces rather than found items. In 1978,

on Berlin's Lützowstraße, he, together with Hermann Pitz and Fritz Rahmann, discovered a building slated for demolition. Back then, the Social Democratic municipal government, still caught up in the tabula rasa thinking of the postwar era, was resolutely pushing its urban redevelopment program. The old, slummy neighborhoods were to be razed and experienced history was to be eradicated, making way for city highways and row housing without the angles of block buildings, without courtyards or squares. Air, light, and hygiene were to boost the spirits of blue-collar and white-collar workers. These functional sociotopes were not meant for flâneurs. Idlers are suspect: that was something Franz Hessel learned back in the twenties: "In this country, you must must, otherwise you mustn't. Here, you don't walk around, you walk to".⁶⁵

The artistic protests against the demolition of history were low-key, insidious, and unspectacular, but persistent. With spare, precise methods, they produced new situations: Situation Lützowstraße, 1979. Using anonymous sculptures such as construction barriers, containers, and the like, Raimund Kummer transformed construction gaps, streets, and urban spaces into temporary artistic venues. In Berlin, according to Kummer, history is "present in a very different way. It becomes visible even in the 'empty spaces' left over from the past; that was why the theme of 'space' was such a great challenge for us".⁶⁶

The trick of disrupting the museum preserve, which neutralizes art to keep it from disturbing, was followed by the postulate of the radical vanguard, which demanded the elimination of boundaries between art and life. Art infiltrates and infects life and vice versa. "No one can say where art begins here and where it ends".⁶⁷ With the Büro Berlin, founded in 1980 as a production agency, the old project was to be implemented concretely and professionally. Like any of the numerous firms and suppliers in Berlin's Kreuzberg, Büro Berlin set up a mailing file, telephone, tool kit, and delivery van. Sobriety, precision, and an ironic fluctuation between real and fictive situations, and no mushy world-changing ideas à la Beuys, infused the work in the Kreuzberg milieu: "We are not formulating any promises of salvation".⁶⁸

The core of their concept was not the finished artwork but the production conditions that are patent or veiled in the product. "Public art" is especially dependent on the taste and goals of the client, whether governmental or corporate. If art leaves its intended bell jar, it stands unshielded in the space of public opinion and has to face its wider audience. That is why the quality of an artwork consists "essentially in not concealing the structure of its process of creation".⁶⁹

The project *Emotope* (9/21-27/87), within an expanded framework, tried to reutilize the experiences at the Büro Berlin, drawing on such "guest" participants as Bogomir Ecker, Stephan Huber, Res Ingold, and Boris Nieslony. (Tony Cragg had already been working at Boeckstraße 7 in 1979, 1980 and 1982). The Bethanien Artists' House presented a conference of the invited artists, with Raimund Kummer providing the decor: the concert grand, the palms, and an oil painting. However, the reality of individual success in the art market shattered the principle of cooperative production: the majority of participating artists rejected any responsibility for the total concept over and above their personal interests. All at once, Raimund Kummer and Fritz Rahmann found themselves in the roles of institutional exhibition-mounters.⁷⁰ Still, the focus of the production concept remained decisive for the artistic work of Kummer and his friends. One of their targets was the process of separating the devotional image from its specific site, where the worshiper could take hold of its presence; this severing always led to the transformation of the image into an "autonomous" artwork, which, detached from the context of its genesis, waits for connoisseurs and art lovers in the mausoleum of the museum. Kummer and his friends, hoping to reverse that process of separation and transformation, wanted the *Emotope* project to restore emotions to a place where they could counter the skepticism of critical reason.

Within the framework of *Emotope*, Kummer chose the sacred aura in the nave of the Church of the Holy Cross in Kreuzberg as the exhibition site: a steel girder, resting on three high-voltage insulators, faced the high altar, like the worshipers in their pews (rep. p. 57). By then, the girder had already enjoyed a long career in Kummer's production process. In 1980, as a former construction element of a demolished building at Naunynstraße 24-26 deep in the heart of Kreuzberg, it became part of a painting action. Next, the girder was "exposed" in a rented gallery (Galerie Giannozzo, Berlin, August 1980); a stand from the Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz contained a commentary – three "guide leaflets" by three witnesses of the Naunynstraße action: "In the gallery, the steel girder, as a component of an aleatory sculpture, suddenly looked like a Minimalist work".⁷¹

The third station at the Church of the Holy Cross supplied a new semantic field for the girder, which had been cleansed of all vestiges of paint, polished to a shine, and then galvanized. "Crooked German" was the nickname for this type of girder before the introduction of the German Standard Specification, and that was what Raimund Kummer called it for a while. Within the cool environment of

spic-and-span Protestant piety in the massive brick church, which suggests a divine power plant, our associations are involuntarily steered toward typically German engineering virtues such as thoroughness, precision, discipline, and practical realism: "Being German means doing something for its own sake".

In the context of everyday church activity, which continued normally during the week-long exhibition, the monumental girder objectified the orientation of the faithful toward the goal of their faith. Like sacred art, it functioned as an aid to faith, making the metaphysical physical: "In that devotion, however, the relationship to a thing is essential, for that relationship is itself merely a mindless deadening of the soul".⁷²

The faithful clearly view something that claims to make something invisible visible. "The work showed the element of faith as an invisible object".⁷³ But what is the object of faith that the work claims to visualize? All salvation wishes bounce off the cold, brutal steel girder. It stands for itself as a naked presence of meaningless monumentality and, for Raimund Kummer, it is also a familiar object with an origin (in the demolished house on Naunynstraße) and a history. Kummer used it, transported it, and stored it in his studio, where it is now awaiting new employment at unknown venues. The spaces that Kummer finds for it will always comment afresh on the girder, reinterpreting it. Like Marcel Duchamp, Kummer sees himself as a cheerful melancholic, knowing that faith in a completely functional world can have no content because "everything else (is) ... a tremendous void,"⁷⁴ yet also knowing that "life is faith".⁷⁵

OBSERVING THE ENEMY

Like Rheinsberg, the Dutch painter Armando arrived in Berlin in 1979 as a guest of the German Academic Exchange Service. He came to spend one year in this city, which is still marked by Nazi barbarism, the war, and the division of Europe; yet he is still here, in what he calls the "lion's den". As a citizen of Holland, a country that was occupied by the Wehrmacht, he commenced his personal *Observation of the Enemy* – the name of a painting cycle done in 1979-1980. Armando too was fascinated by the "often unbearable tension between a seemingly carefree present and an oppressive past (in a city) full of sites and traces".⁷⁶ (The past) "constantly lies in ambush here. It pops up nastily in the simplest conversations".⁷⁷

Earlier, in Holland, he had been haunted by the theme of a *Guilty Landscape* – the title of a series of paintings and drawings done in 1972, 1975, 1987 – which is tacitly linked to a guilty Germany. His obsession was triggered by

his memories of growing up during the Second World War right near the German concentration camp at Amersfoort. It was "a place petrified in guilt and shame. A place that, as it itself says, had a different smell from other places because of the presence of German soldiers ... Poignant executioners in foul-smelling coats and with shaved necks. Unmoved in their cruel beauty, vulnerable in their all-too-obvious humanity as victim and victimizer in one person".⁷⁸

In dealing with the past, Armando is concerned with the innocence of the "splendid nature" that graciously conceals the sites of gruesome battles and the topography of the camps and the concentration-camp barracks. He finds this natural beauty as sinister as artistic beauty. The beauty of nature, an indifferent witness to so many crimes, compels him to transfer evil "into the amoral and therefore guiltless domain of art. And lo and behold: evil is no longer evil, it is art" (Armando, p. 39). Art forces him to aestheticize violence and thereby excuse it.

In the tradition of Protestant skepticism toward images, Armando torments the ambivalence of beauty, which he loves, and which has him in its power. How can he as a painter do justice to the entanglement of beauty, shame, and guilt without "affirming the heinous course of the world as adamant nature"?⁷⁹

There was no place for evil in Plato's idealistic aesthetic of beauty as the sensory manifestation of metaphysical truth and goodness – a notion that prevailed until late in the nineteenth century. It was only in 1853, in his *Aesthetics of the Ugly*, that Karl Rosenkranz, a disciple of Hegel's, dared to descend into the "hell of the beautiful", which was also "the hell of evil".⁸⁰ Earlier, Hegel, in his own *Aesthetics*, 1835, had to concede that the "endlessness of pain"⁸¹ in Late Medieval Christian ("Romantic") art could no longer be presented in the forms of Greek beauty. Then, in his novel *Là-bas* (Down There, published in 1891), Joris-Karl Huysmans, the Paris-born son of a Dutch draftsman, writes about the crucified Christ in Matthias Grünewald's Tauberbischofsheim Altar (Kunsthalle Karlsruhe). The figure is drastically described as cruelly tormented and ugly: "Above this erupting corpse, the head appeared, tremendous and rebellious; wearing a confused crown of thorns ... it barely opened a broken eye, in which a look of pain and horror was still shuddering".⁸²

For the Expressionists, who had enthusiastically discovered Grünewald for themselves,⁸³ "ugliness, grandeur, and power"⁸⁴ lay cheek by jowl in that altar painting. Armando notes that the artist unexpectedly labors "on something beautiful, as painful as it may be ... How poi-

gnant the suffering on the cross, how splendid Grünewald's painting is Art is treacherous".⁸⁵

Given the unbridgeable gap between object cognition and subject certitude, between reflection and sensory viewing, between morality and aesthetics as an experience of modernity, it is "senseless to call nature guilty; yet art is senseless, and that's why art is so indispensable. And unconscionable. Providing a sense for the senseless".⁸⁶

Back in 1757, the British philosopher Edmund Burke defined the sublime as a sensation inspired by terror, dizzying, bottomlessness, and helplessness.⁸⁷ For Immanuel Kant, in his *Critique of Judgment*, these spiritual shocks are impelled by the sight of a raw, unvanquished nature: "Bold, overhanging, virtually menacing rocks, storm clouds towering up in the sky ... volcanoes ... hurricanes ... the limitless ocean... and so forth".⁸⁸ This sublimity, which Kant "reserved for nature, subsequently becomes the historical constituent of art itself"⁸⁹ ... (conflicting with taste, which) heeds only form and never content ... All objective differences between things are lost, and it is merely the manifestation that determines their value".⁹⁰

On the other hand, when Caspar David Friedrich painted *The Monk by the Sea* (1808-10), he was fully aware of the irrevocably lost unity of man and nature. His painting reveals the now visible demarcation between finite and infinite, and the shock is "a memento of the liquidation of the self, which is shaken into an awareness of its own limited and finite nature".⁹¹ When viewing Armando's guilty landscapes, the spectator loses the ground underfoot, and "the possibility of truth, embodied in the aesthetic picture, becomes physical for him".⁹² In Armando's 1987 paintings (p. 40), the canvas becomes a "battle area". Akin to lava that has cooled off after a volcanic eruption, the "raging of man and nature" (Armando) has come to a sinister and intrinsically dynamic rest. Placeless like the monk by the sea, the viewer faces the viewed. In the sublimity of an art "that trembles in itself", nature comes back, not as an image of yearning for natural beauty, but as an "antithetical image of mere existence".⁹³

"Unbeautiful beauty, dreadful beauty become art, resulting, I hope, in sublimity-sublimity as the artistic taming of horror" (Armando, p. 39).

GERMAN THOROUGHNESS

On June 22, 1989, several months before the opening of the Wall, an unusual performance took place within the framework of a "permanent art conference" at the center of the "capital of the German Democratic Republic". Props from a German schoolroom were assembled in a gallery: a stuffed eagle, a stuffed buzzard, a black mirror, a pupil's

desk. While Via Lewandowsky, wielding a long iron rod, kept pushing a dead pigeon lying on the floor, the writer Durs Grünbein read a text aloud at the desk. The scene descended into a fog of coal dust stirred up by a vacuum cleaner. "Outside, the incredibly loud implosion of a landscape. With German thoroughness".⁹⁴

After the construction of the Wall in 1961, the generation of Lewandowsky and Grünbein was "born into"⁹⁵ a society for which the "dismal metaphor of a gigantic cage" urges itself on us: "a stable and absolutely safeguarded fence, inside of which people were perfectly ... trained toward performance and obedience".⁹⁶ The state, a closed institution using its own judgment to allow its citizens to leave or not to leave, barricaded itself behind the Wall. Labeling it an "anti-Fascistic defense wall", it legitimized its repressive dictatorship by citing the necessity of an offensive "anti-Fascism". According to the Communist definition, Fascism was and is "the open terrorist dictatorship ... of financial capitalism".⁹⁷ Communist propaganda depicted the "bourgeois-capitalist" Federal Republic – along with America a major enemy in the permanent class struggle – as being latently prepared to launch "further Fascist putsches".

Communists who had fought in the anti-Nazi resistance, had been marked by emigration and concentration camps, and had subsequently become Party leaders of East Germany, regarded their own population, which had followed Hitler, as a domestic foe. They interned themselves in a hermetically sealed government ghetto surrounded by walls and watchtowers: Wandlitz, north of Berlin, right near the former concentration camp in Sachsenhausen. The two German dictatorships – the Nazi regime, 1933-45, and the East German regime, 1949-89 – resembled one another with their totalitarian methods of surveillance, seduction, and subjugation through the leader cult, mass processions, and state security organs. All these components were meant to shape the population into a *Volksgemeinschaft* (Nazi jargon meaning an ethnic, national community) or *sozialistische Menschengemeinschaft* (GDR jargon meaning a Socialist community of people). The mere mention of that structural resemblance was taboo in the German Democratic Republic; and so the psychological deformations of everyday Nazi life could survive uninterrupted and consolidate in East Germany. The educational ideals for the "new Socialist man" were the same as for the "loyal underling" (title of a novel by Heinrich Mann) under the Kaiser: neatness, cleanliness, punctuality, conscientiousness, precision, hard work, thoroughness, self-control, discipline, and order.

At Dresden's Academy of Art, a group of young artists

reacted to the virtue terrorism of this society with their self-perforation performances: here, the senseless resistance struggle against the phantom of a ubiquitous yet intangible state was replaced by a demonstrative retreat into one's own body as the ultimate refuge. Every performance was a self-experiment, which without trying to teach or enlighten the audience, made it aware of the permanent situation of exception and amputation in the pressure cooker of East Germany.

As an emergency collective, the performance group, which included Else Gabriel, Micha Brendel, and Rainer Görß, quickly disbanded after the end of the German Democratic Republic. Now, each member was on his or her own.

In 1989, Via Lewandowsky moved to Berlin, where he discovered the principle of reproductive painting, "a form of art recycling" (Lewandowsky) for found and already reproduced pictures. The transformation of art by art was carried to an ironic extreme by his use of mostly trivial pictures and the resolute mechanizing of the artist's creative act – from Xerox machines, plastic sheets, montages, and multiple projections to the exact manual copying on canvas as pseudo-authentic handwriting. The springboard for Lewandowsky's bodily picture puzzles are first-aid brochures from the twenties and thirties, which, when combined, freeze into sinister reproductions of "German thoroughness". The ideology of a "Socialist humanistic image of man", which, in the wake of a culture-vulture bourgeoisie, wants to *Climb the Heights* (oil on paper, 1989), is given notice in Lewandowsky's visual deconstructions. With his mutants, monsters, deformations, and phantom pictures, he offensively reveals how the social power structure, with the help of institutional medicine, social hygiene, and compulsory education, puts its hand on the human body, training it, measuring it, and marking it. The mishandled body lacks the pleasure it could take in itself. A surrogate social self (national community, party, army), as a "uniform", holds the bodiless self together. Thus, *Frozen Limbs Break Easily* (1988) shows the breakup of this sterile, drilled body-armor. The bandaged, disjointed cripples plunge into an eerie *Torso Stamping* (1988, oil on canvas, three parts). With their deformed organs, they demonstrate against their mishandling and signal that *Something Must Be Very Wrong* (p. 59). Lewandowsky engages in negative research on his family tree: *Forebears in the Out*, 1988. His *The German Family, Seated Party with 3 Steel Stools*, 1990, filtered through countless grids, shows the quintessence of those facial features that characterize the German phenotype as an official, a junior officer, a head of family, and a ticket taker.

In the series *They Can't hear Any Screaming – Eight Portraits for Euthanasia* (1989, acrylic, urine on canvas), the legend of the warlike human being is joined by “the legend of the human being who puts his fellow humans to sleep, numbing them, administering them, locking them in to orders, ideologically blackmailing them, etc”.⁹⁸

The 600-part work *Counter-selection* (1992) (cf. pp. 59) borrows a concept from Nazi racial theory, driving it *ad absurdum*: “The proliferation of ... genetically inferior people spells a serious racial degeneration of a nation, and within just a few centuries, if nothing is done against this danger, the capable, genetically healthy component will die out because of “counter-selection”.⁹⁹

Who or what is the subject that “counter-selects”, undermining the selection of the “racially best”? Nature, man, social hygiene? In response to the violent “counter-selection” in the government-propagated ideologies and educational programs, Lewandowsky offers a *Counter-Selection*, which turns the principle of selecting orders topsy-turvy. For him, the world becomes a domino game, the artist puts the dominoes now here, now there: *There Is No End after the End* (p. 61). The spectator is asked to carry out his personal counter-selection.

Now, in the early nineteen-nineties, the behavior of the artists in Berlin, the interface between two blueprints of Utopia, is dominated by a cheerful skepticism. They have nothing to lose. Utopias and ideologies have keeled over like a series of dominoes. The current goal is a sober inventory. In contrast to their doubts, a condition of being torn between mutually exclusive standpoints, the skepticism is “indifferent toward both one and the other; that is the position of *ataraxia*”.¹⁰⁰ The artists, like anyone else, are unable to penetrate the secrets of the fourth dimension, the micro-world of molecular structures, or the paradoxes of the theory of chaos. They refuse to interpret the world. They jump about on the ground, challenging the connoisseurs: “What you will” (p. 77). Highly alert, like any melancholic, they surprise us with the play of possibilities: “Is the double helix of the DNA a microfilm belonging to some intergalactic secret service, rattling unchecked through ITS projector, projecting us on the screen of time? There we would be trapped like cartoon figures and would, with our long noses, short legs, our helpless hopping about, arouse laughter from the heavenly hosts on furlough or in the military hospital” [(e.) Twin Gabriel, p. 49)].

Translated by Joachim Neugroschel

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Transit Berlin

For Viktor K., the first hostage in orbit

What a nightmare... Someone up in outer space is circling alone in a capsule chock-full of electronics – a Russian cosmonaut, a hermit in orbit, catapulted by his fellow humans into the universe, where no one can hear him scream... And time drags by, in a different way up there than down on earth, and when he returns after a hundred or more days, everything has changed virtually overnight. The world he finds is not the one he took off from. Several small revolutions and putsches have been pulled off. The major power, the seventy-year-old construct that was his nation, has crumbled and the entire hierarchy of the state apparatus, the government, and the political system have been dissolved. His former commanders have vanished from the control centers. The army he belongs to according to regulations has been placed under a new authority. He is totally at sea, even the national currency is new, and throughout the land the effigies of leaders and the monuments to heroes have been swept away with a fury that has already long since dissipated. All at once, he can understand Einstein's relativism – the two-fold or thousand-fold existences of parallel times – he can grab hold of it as a banal experience. Nietzsche's vision, the transvaluation of all values, oblivion as the irruption of the vegetative into the historical – he runs into them at the end of a long voyage into the galactic night. Everything is otherwise the instant he again sets foot on home soil.

Wasn't the static nature of earthly conditions, wasn't the permafrost of reality the long-term basis for the successes of all the exorbitant projects, just as the immovable launching pad was a guarantee for the acceleration of missiles? What an equation of times – internal and external, Eastern and Western, earthly and interplanetary – a whole world collapses once this structure of times loosens or merely shifts for a few seconds – arc seconds.

Yet that is precisely what happened with the disintegration of the Soviet empire. It was precisely that supernova in the chronological sky that appeared, it was precisely that earthquake measuring 10 on the Richter scale that shook Europe – and all at once, entire populations experienced the same things as that lonesome homecomer from outer space. The earth began rocking underfoot. As if

from distant alignments, accelerated long since and accelerating even more with every postwar decade, a new architecture with a spatial order and a sign language is growing toward the numbed spectator. The static topography of Europe's East, inscribed deep in the senses and memory of its inhabitants, is yielding to the dynamic cyclical world of the West with all its centrifugal forces – economic, political, and moral. The closed horizon, the typical campanella infrastructure, the grid of flat surfaces (made up of walls, borders, quonset huts, satellite settlements, and barracks) – they all rip open in quick-motion, and underneath, space implodes like an old picture tube. The emigration of icons and unfulfillable visions is followed by the import of commodities and values. And at last, the East is experiencing the onset of that polytheistic era, whose new human beings were the subject of Paul Valéry's oracle in 1940: "They jump through religions as through paper hoops."

What was different – we wonder today – about those people on the other side of the magic line, what was different about their everyday life, their thinking, their culture? Did they doze away their time in monotonous stretches and paranoid reclusion? Are their life stories again flowing into the great universal torrent of History now that the time wall has been smashed and the status quo has been given notice? And what does artistic labor mean twenty thousand leagues under the sea, down on the ocean floor or up in some orbit of eschatological time? Are there any survivors of the Orwell states who could maintain their willfulness against all collective tectonics, amid sunken population strata, between megalomania, cynicism, self-sacrifice, and banal ideals? Survivors do exist, of course; but what can their strength accomplish during a phase in which a necrophilic retrospect has long since been wrestling with animal oblivion?

If it is true that the vast social experiment in the East has led to a different anthropological type, then Berlin, like no other place in Europe, is predestined to demonstrate this. For here we have the key to the absurd adjacency of two times, two models, two modes of being, which were as diverse as those of natives and missionaries in the days of the voyages of exploration.

Wasn't it here, during the nineteen-twenties, in the cabaret of the big - city jungle, in one of the most spectacular urban shows of their time, that the new types first stepped out on the runway: the radarman, the soul engineer, the androgynous stage star, the nerve clown, the metropolis philosopher.... Spawns of a neo-realistic fantasy, on the go between the silent-movie era and the sound-movie era. At a single word from the Führer, they all

vanished on the evening of the Nazi Ash Wednesday, like vampires in a rain of holy water, and have never been seen again. Today, some people still grieve for the great wraiths of yore, who were never called back by any economic miracle, any postwar boon, and certainly not by any collective detention-camp life. A Renaissance of such enormous artistic scope was possible neither in the Western part of the city, under the Allied protectorate, nor in the Eastern part, under the strict, controlling glare of Stalin's Communist bishops.

Berlin – all the terror radiated from here, this was the eye of the cyclone, in which an evil lull had prevailed for a long time, until this place, a breeding ground of destructive spirits was devastated and silenced by bomber formations from the West and tanks from the East and finally carved up by enemies, according to a treaty and put in foster care. Since then, this city has been ruled by hysteria, the competition between market and Marx. More than once it looked as if World War III would flare up here, on the system sluices between East and West. The tired dualism, the good-and-evil madness went through each body, each brain, and, in the course of years, became a geographic-political-anatomical schism, which no biography, no image of the world, no aesthetic sketch could escape. Yet who was the chess figure, and who the kibitzer? Who had the comfort of inner distance, of the left-wing or right-wing ideological keynote, and who was a hostage in the scenario of powers? Was the sensitivity of the West the slow East? Was the futility of the East the dynamic West?

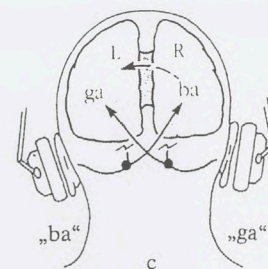
It is time we talked about the situation of the artist now, in the year 2 of the unification. By and large, of course, only anecdotes – mostly unbelievable stories – can render what happened here during the years of the de facto division. Nothing will explain why the metropolitan art had to be reported as missing without any fuss. No documentary round-dance of blockades, smear campaigns, workers' uprising, wall construction, student demonstrations, and exchange of agents, no motif whatsoever from this Cold War picture book can lead to any conclusions about the modes of disappearance. And only the oldsters can say what is really missing – even just to hear the youngsters tell what has been remaindered, thank God, and wound up in garbage dumps. For in the nakedness, in the bleak symmetry of East and West, in all the coldness of a front-line city, we are ultimately left with the crooked generation gap, the derisive guffaws of biological reproduction. Against the nostalgic monologues, wandering addictedly through empty squares, against the phantom pain at the sight of razed streets, bulldozed lifeworlds, buried graveyards – the “okay” of the youngsters,

their fresh sanguinity, their appetite for fads, technologies, and concepts assert themselves and stand their ground almost cynically. Should the youngsters be the first to realize that identity is a picture puzzle, the sum of individual illusions that together yield only a popular phantasm? Their hunting grounds seem to be the no-man's-lands, the intermediary zones, the still unmarked terrains, where, as clowns of the virtual, they practice a kind of existence like that in a transit room. This secret credo is the all-around openness, the drive-driven alertness within a world of things, where the self is analyzed a million times and dissolved in a plethora of stimuli. The new artist has no program now, only nerves and a fine flair for coordinates. Tropisms on the edges of old forms, indifferent steps, leaps aloft into the immaterial are his favorite moves in a game that keeps abandoning its rules and issuing new ones. Style is, at best, an ironically playful camouflage or mimicry, an insect-like movement in the twilight of greenhouse afternoons. Between necrophilia and neurology, style's path zigzags through urban danger zones, no differently than the path of juvenile gangs, who devote their time to car chases, subway surfing, or department-store pirating. Flights, pauses, stuttering, minor aesthetic aphasias – it is always the defect, the disturbance in the social process, that ludicrous intelligible adventure that stimulates style. Everything that used to guarantee exclusivity – style, theme, grand gesture, expression – is taboo in the eyes of these strays, an elderly, necrophilic pleasure. Is it a coincidence that they all spend so much time traveling – a generation of jet-setters, forever en route, absorbed in clock comparisons and transfers from one life sphere to the next, nowhere at home and never arriving. Berlin is the best shooting location for their movie – a series of endlessly overlapping images; Berlin is a kind of reality studio hastily set up by two world powers, a Hollywood composed of set pieces from the hottest European history, a Prussian-Protestant-Socialist Cinecitta made up of parade avenues, back courts, office centers, villas, museums, railroad networks ... insanely larded with tiny traps down to the teensiest niches, or in some spots, where the Brandenburg sand is blatantly exposed, simply swept flat – the ideal storage place for backdrops. On this turntable, which, wedged between Eastern and Western Europe, will soon become the German capital, they are the first to awaken with that new dizziness that is so characteristic of the transit artist, who has long since become the normal type in other places. In our climes, they are the first returnees from that long nightmare called History.

Transitio – in Latin it had three meanings, and the subtle differences, stored in a single word from which they

reciprocally issue, may still shed light on the current variations. For one thing, it signified joining the enemy – a genuine Roman trauma. If we follow the still valid theory of classes, then this part of the Eastern artist's quota, whether forced or voluntary (it all depends), is filled. He has now reached the exact place where a regime that was pedagogically intent on isolation could only imagine him as lost. The second meaning, leading from the political to the pathological, refers to a disease infection. If dynamics, efficiency, libidinous idiocy, and technology are viewed as specifically Western disease forms, then this definition too will soon be apt, even if someone or other still pays attention to his diet and yearns for some nineteenth-century village. However, in its most ubiquitous meaning – one that is so physically fundamental as to refer to every single body – *transitio* signifies a passage through a place. And in the age of absolute acceleration and mediatization, this is, presumably, the real denominator. Being at home early on in the media, which are themselves transitory places, i.e., non-places, the ephemerality of all approaches, the conspicuous swarming around transitions and interfaces – this whole behavior (which can only be understood in zoological terms) along an alignment from Point A (birth) to Point B (death) hints at the breakneck speed of the change. As paradoxical as it may sound, today's artist can be grasped only as a point; the body of his work, whether immaterially or strategically scattered across the earth, is still escaping or has long since skedaddled into the world of things, into everyday life. Considering the temporary installations, the invisible field studies, and the finds that are briefly exposed and then instantly recirculated, nothing would be more nonsensical than talking about a *work*. All those things – as well-founded and reprocessed and wittily or self-importantly presented in museums as they may be – are, at best, excerpts, stopgaps, brief pauses in the barrage fire of reproduction, or a fleeting index cunningly wrested from an anonymous semantics. Linguistically, precisely because of its polyvalence, they have lost any context; yet as a fragment, incident, arbitrary act, transmission of an individual voice in the chaos, they lay claim to the full rank of a *moment juste*. Prick up your ears and keep going! That could be the slogan of all friendly participants. For no discourse maintains itself in transience beyond the next name change, the next collapse of the hierarchy... Have we finally reached the place where Nietzsche saw art and intellect stirring, in a sign-realm of semblance, where the *free lie* plays with the elements of a world that is disintegrating more and more into its changing manifestations?

Translated by Joachim Neugroschel



Happy Necrologue

How to interpret one more death?
 Death of a modern system,
 zoological system,
 body system,
 language system –
Posthumous inner voice speaks.

After the closing
 of the circle now
 its squaring. This view
 is a translation too late
 in terms of psychotechnique.
 Because form
 is crueler than confidence
 and dimension is more
 wondrous than form.

The body is what is left over
 from the invention
 of the brave-new-world's man.

It is Pavlov's ROM,
 memory of the system
 as a bundle
 of conditioned reflexes.
 There are different reflexes
 in Eastern Hemisphere. Fear
 the different reflexes in Eastern Hemisphere!
 As if each single word
 had had to pass
 this famous saliva funnel.
 Drip drop drip drop
 Last utopia's flop.

for Christoph Tannert
 Toronto 9/24/91

Dieter Appelt

Light and Time

Time alone is not visible. In order for human hands to make it vivid to the human eye, two things are required: matter—whether solid, fluid or gaseous—on the one hand, and light on the other. For good reason someone who works with the photographic medium is called a sculptor of light. He sculpts by using light, as well as shaping light itself. He needs light and is able to capture, change, and give it shape in the interplay between matter and time. It loses its unlimited character and takes on a finite form.

Form appears as matter becoming transparent. The light in matter turns into energy and begins to radiate. Things dissolve in the light; they begin to stream and flow away; but the shadows remain. The shadows seem to make up the only real element of things. Things become more tangible and gripping the more they elude us and attempt to return to twilight. There is another movement conforming to the rotating motion of volume, albeit an asynchronous one in the opposite direction, that of the aperture in the camera. It opens and closes the lens at variable intervals, allowing longer and shorter shutter speeds and exposure times to follow one after the other. This rhythmic motion of the aperture is repeated thousands of times, which results in one and the same negative being exposed several thousand times at changing intervals and with different exposure times.

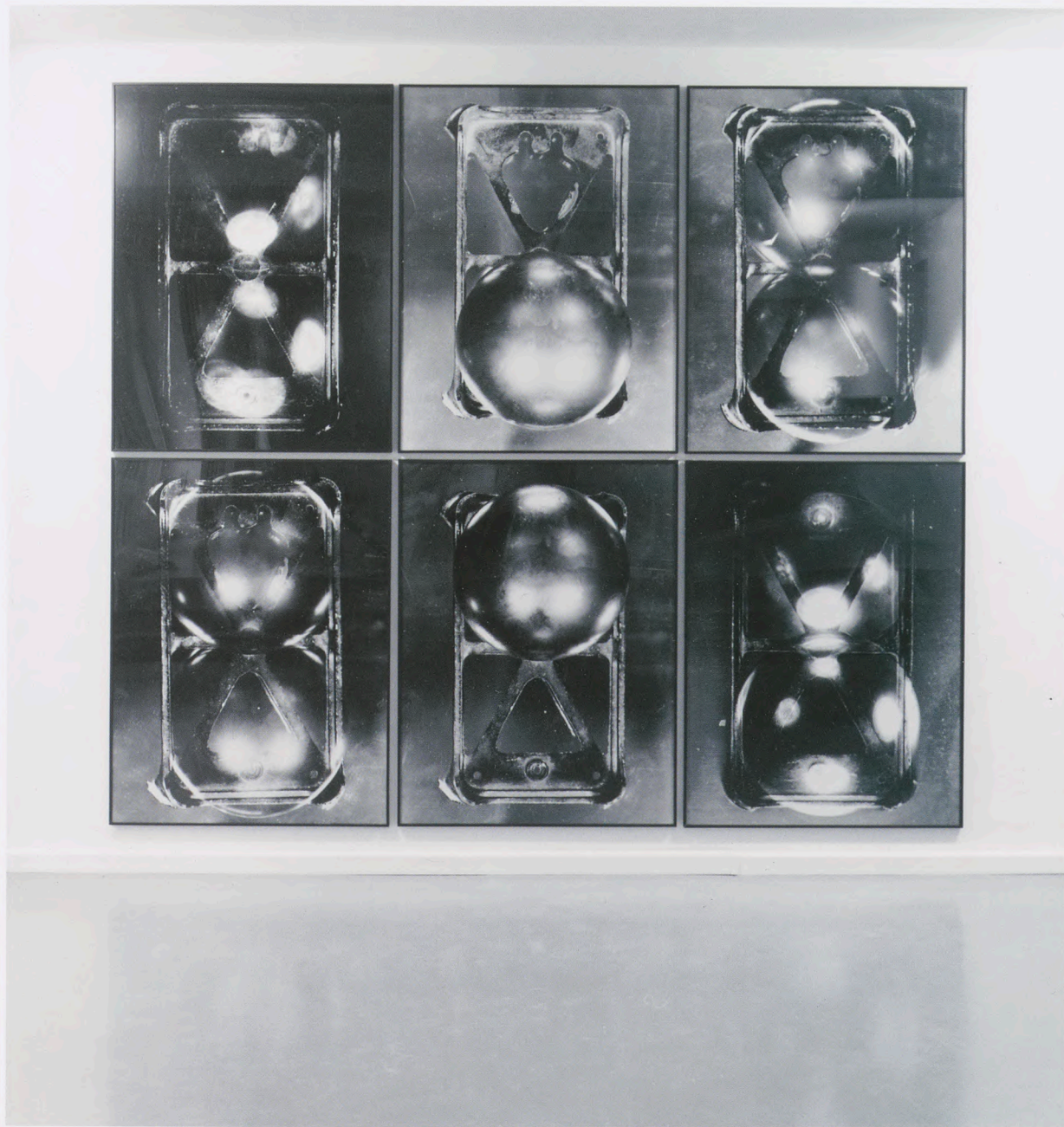
One can hardly imagine a more complex image than one which has been developed in this way. Dieter Appelt is the first photographer who has succeeded in creating such a complex image of reality, light, time, and matter, using such simple means. However, the product is more than the many-layered result of a photographic endeavor. It is an image of the perfect sculpture, such as might have originated in Brancusi's studio. Its secret is to represent motion as inertia, the greatest possible motion as the greatest possible inertia. The opaque becomes diaphanous, the surface polished; the shadows glow; the twilight makes things visible. The light falls onto the surface of the rotating matter – at rest in its rotation – like snowfall. Matter is blanketed with light like a blanket of snow. A perfect

balance seems achieved, between life as motion, course, and process and its final goal to which all restlessness eventually leads: the exhaustion of motion, a balance between matter and form, reality and image, space and light.

Accelerating and stopping time is an original and ineradicable desire of mankind. With his photographs Dieter Appelt has achieved both in the realm of art; more precisely, he has fulfilled the one by means of the other. The complex artistic process he has developed is based on nothing more than consistently engaging the idea of accelerating time. The result, however, is an image of stopped time, inertia, and absolute duration. The artist opens and closes the aperture at changing intervals, has one shot follow the next, lays one layer of light on another onto the photographic plate, repeatedly skips units of time of varying lengths, altogether thousands of times in every picture. He thereby accelerates time, collects selected moments in time, and condenses them using time-lapse photography. The resulting photographic image, composed of thousands of exposures and thousands of layers of light, is stopped, accumulated, and conglomerated time. It is no longer an image of something which exists outside of itself, because what becomes visible does not exist in that form removed from the photographic plate; it is not an image, but the thing itself, the actual reality. This reality is the perfect sculpture, not a sculpture made of matter and motion, but something new, a body composed of light and time.

Wieland Schmied

Translated by Susanne Hofmann



Die Schatten erinnern an nichts (The Shadows
Remind of Nothing), 1991
6 photographs, 150 x 115 cm each



Uranus, 1990 ▶▶
photographs, 100 x 80 cm each





Armando

On Beauty

I would like to say a few words about my precarious dealings with beauty, or rather with what is known as 'the beauty of evil'.

And when I speak of 'evil', I refer to what mankind, for the sake of convenience, calls evil. I have adopted the term because experience has taught me that evil exists; and not experience alone, but the mirror too. I have indeed taken a look from time to time. What I see there is not up to much.

People often speak, rightly or wrongly – it is not relevant here which – in a holier-than-thou way of those who subjected themselves to the enemy of the day entirely of their own free will. Fine, but what is your opinion of the trees, the firs and the spruce, which have submitted without reservation, and continue to submit, to whatever enemy comes along? Look at pictures of the enemy in action: there they are, the trees, standing about in the background and laughing. And not just the firs and the spruce, but the other trees too. Shouldn't something be said about that?

I feel it should, for they stand there still, the trees, the edges of the forest and that evil woodland, in the self-same spot they stood at the time, you mustn't think that they have gone elsewhere, they stand there still as indifferent witnesses. I look at them, I look them over, then something sickening happens: they are beautiful, I find them beautiful.

I have said it many times but I cannot repeat it often enough: beauty is suspect, beauty isn't worth a hill of beans, beauty couldn't care less, beauty always gets in the way. Let me give you an example. I have in mind a particular place where several roads meet. During the week there is never much traffic. Shrubs grow under the trees. The air hums and smells sweet. The surface of the road looks dreamy. An unattainable country house. A man riding a horse. Someone on a bicycle with a bunch of heath-er stuck on the back. Truly, an *idyll*.

Meanwhile, however, the place takes on another form. The same shrubs, the same trees. It is still quiet, but

there is something wrong, an action was fought here, an action. The chill. The barrenness. The victims. The bleak roads strewn with refuse. The residue of power.

One and the same place, but in the memory the scene of brute force is almost more beautiful than was the idyll. It is enough to drive you mad.

Because beauty has settled in, beauty has taken possession of the place, and it was this very beauty that once showed herself to me, disclosed herself to me.

It is the beauty of evil, it is the beauty in the belly of evil, seeking a place in the wake of evil to show herself to me, although that is no help to me at all.

This beauty compels me to introduce 'evil' into the blameless, because amoral, domain of art. And lo: the evil is evil no longer, it is art. It sounds unworthy of belief, but it is true. Unbeautiful beauty, terrible beauty, becomes art with, I hope, the sublime as the outcome, the sublime as the artistic subjugation of the abominable.

It is to this very beauty that I have lost my heart. I have devoted my life up till now to this beauty. She has me in her power. There is no doubt: I serve her.

Do not imagine this to be an unmitigated pleasure. Because from time to time I do feel obliged to take refuge, seek repose. You must have that, or else you die before your time. If, day and night, for weeks and months on end, I am involved in doomed attempts to still the ravings of man and nature in a work of art, then once the work is done I can find repose only in the frantic paging through of a book filled with color illustrations of, say, paintings by Bonnard.

Painters like Bonnard did not offend against the evil cast of the creation, they ignored the beauty of evil, they allowed it to pass them by, they fixed their gaze indefatigably upon the beauty of the commonplace, on beauty within arm's reach, which made the step towards the work of art shorter. Not easier, but shorter. The nations went furiously into battle, but these people stayed, if possible, at home, painting a woman on a chair. Or they painted flowers with arms uplifted to a cloudless sky.

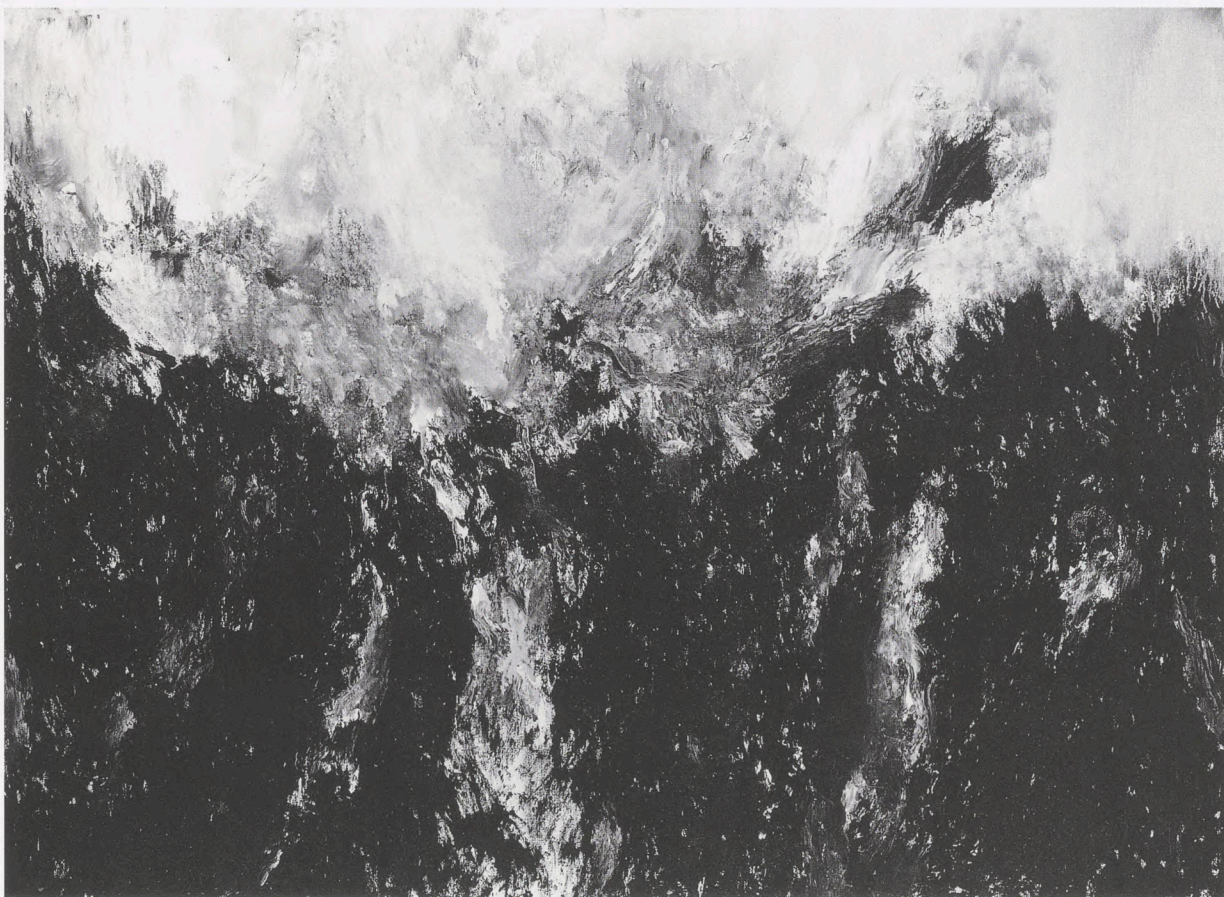
Once upon a time I found such painters thoroughly obnoxious, but I seem to have changed my mind. Today I think that they were perfectly right, I admire and envy them, for I cannot do what they do, I am not guileless enough.

What I mean is: let me be. There can be no evil in it.

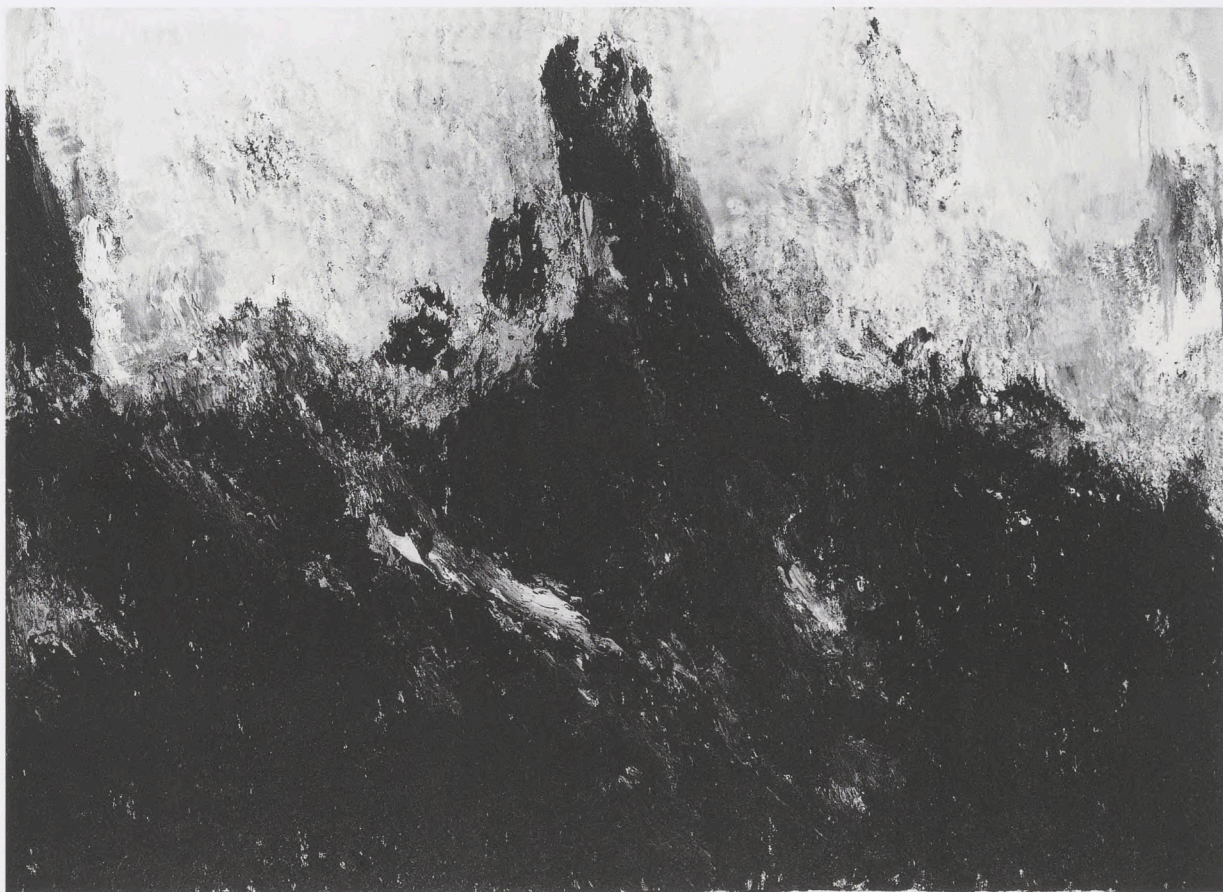
Armando

Translated from the Dutch by Arnold J. Pomerans

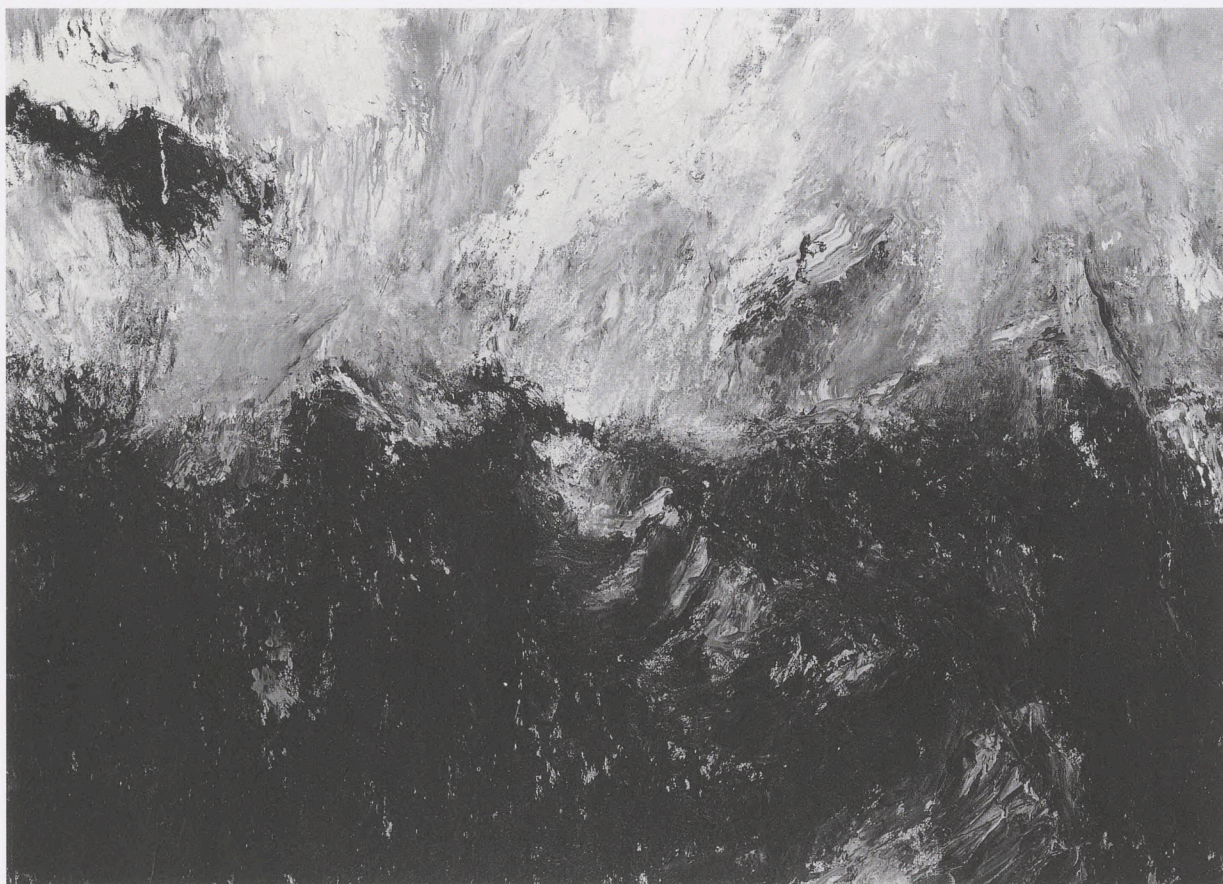
This text was Armando's address on being awarded the Gouden Ganzeveer, the cultural prize of the Royal Netherlands Publishers Association, in 1987.



Gefechtsfeld 2.4.1987 (Battlefield 4/2/1987)
oil on canvas, 165 x 225 cm



Gefechtsfeld 22.4.1987 (Battlefield 4/22/1987)
oil on canvas, 165 x 225 cm



Gefechtsfeld 10.4.1987 (Battlefield 4/10/1987)
oil on canvas, 165 x 225 cm

Die Leiter 31.7.1990 (The Ladder 7/31/1990) ►
oil on canvas, 250 x 198 cm



Thomas Florschuetz

Concrete Puzzles

The times are past when the concrete set the tone in art. With a little bit of luck, you do still run into one of the old leading concretists, who will say to you »Linguistic photography, what's that? There's linguistics, and there's photography. Both can be applied to one another, but don't have to be.«

Thomas Florschuetz makes photocopies, that much is certain. Different in format and order, in front of changing, often monochromatic backgrounds, in black-and-white and color, they show, by far the simplest objects, mostly in the studio, mostly close by, and photographed *en detail*. His motifs are such complex externals as heads, arms, hands, fingers, and thus the physical; or nails, candles, clothes pins and thus the inorganic. Both can be applied to one another, but don't have to be. A nail that appears in connection with a finger can, for example, be a fingernail – the language is familiar with this as a pun or *compositum*. The point of a nail and a finger are extremities; they mark their respective furthestmost endpoints, they lead the object to the extreme or its boundary. The semantic speculation first begins afterwards. Does it concern itself with injury, a prosthesis, a certain kind of torture? It is all a picture puzzle, for example, the decomposition of the Christian Crucifixion scene? The dismembered corpse of the Savior in enlargement, or the monstrous skin of us all? Too much asked, asked over and above the visible, already past. What alone stands firm and preserves *the intrinsic value of the alienation*, is the picture in question.

Invisibly tattooed, it is the skin encased in the silence, in the blue, a tension of arteries and naked violence.

At a meeting in his studio Thomas Florschuetz demonstrates the effects of a milky pane of glass to me. He holds it in front of the cover of a road map of Europe, and shows me how this becomes first pale, then cloudy at some distances. Only the contours are still visible, their interrelation already diffuse. By a slight shifting comes forth first unclarity, then clarity. As if the glass of milk were a white polarization filter, it comes finally to an obliteration of the motif.

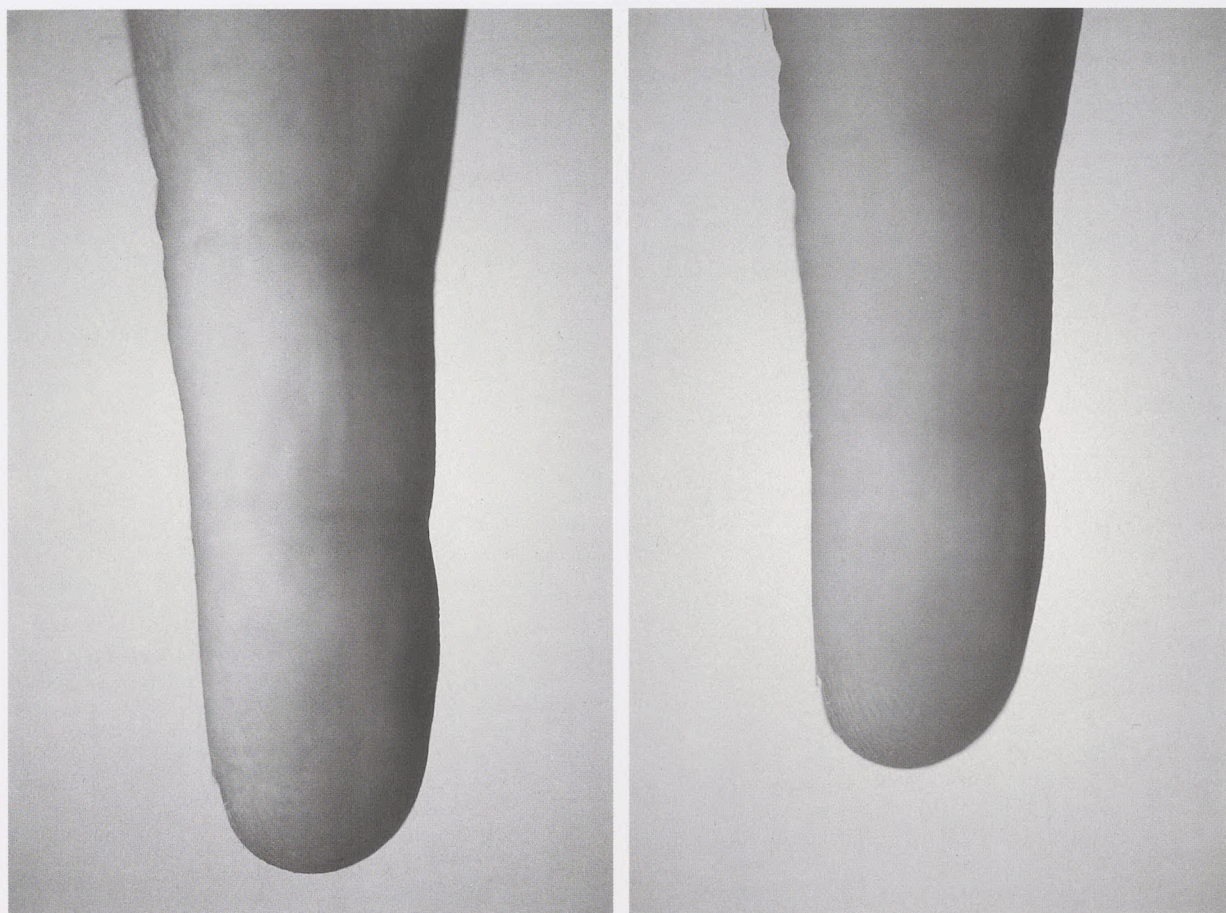
Thomas Florschuetz's works refer quite elementarily to that which can be seen and that which can be shown. In this they are similar to Wittgenstein's criticism of language. There, the doubt into which the sayable is pulled turns again with him as rational skepticism against the visible. In the interaction of the visual elements here, linguistic elements there, what it is about are the conditions under which certainty comes into being. How between body and logic there gapes a fine rift between perception and expression to which the misunderstandings only escape as the irony of the exchange of opinions. What in Florschuetz's photo panels is still minimalistic or purist turns out to be suddenly the contrast of what for him remains an open problem after the hopeless mixture and mutation of all styles. Thereby, the almost criminological caution with which he takes every step, with which he prepares each tiniest deviation, takes on the quality of court proceedings. Whether for or against the image, whether for or against the real and the certain remains in suspense. Probably the motif – and formal invariants of this photography follow a strategy of avoid and retreat, probably it is a reconnaissance in a room first death-coded a short time ago.

Seen linguistically, a paradox, these works are reminiscent of the workings of the verbs in a sentence: Their horizon would then be the infinitive, the unconjugated form, while they themselves, in play with the bodily fragment, keep on demonstrating inflection, bonding and attachment.

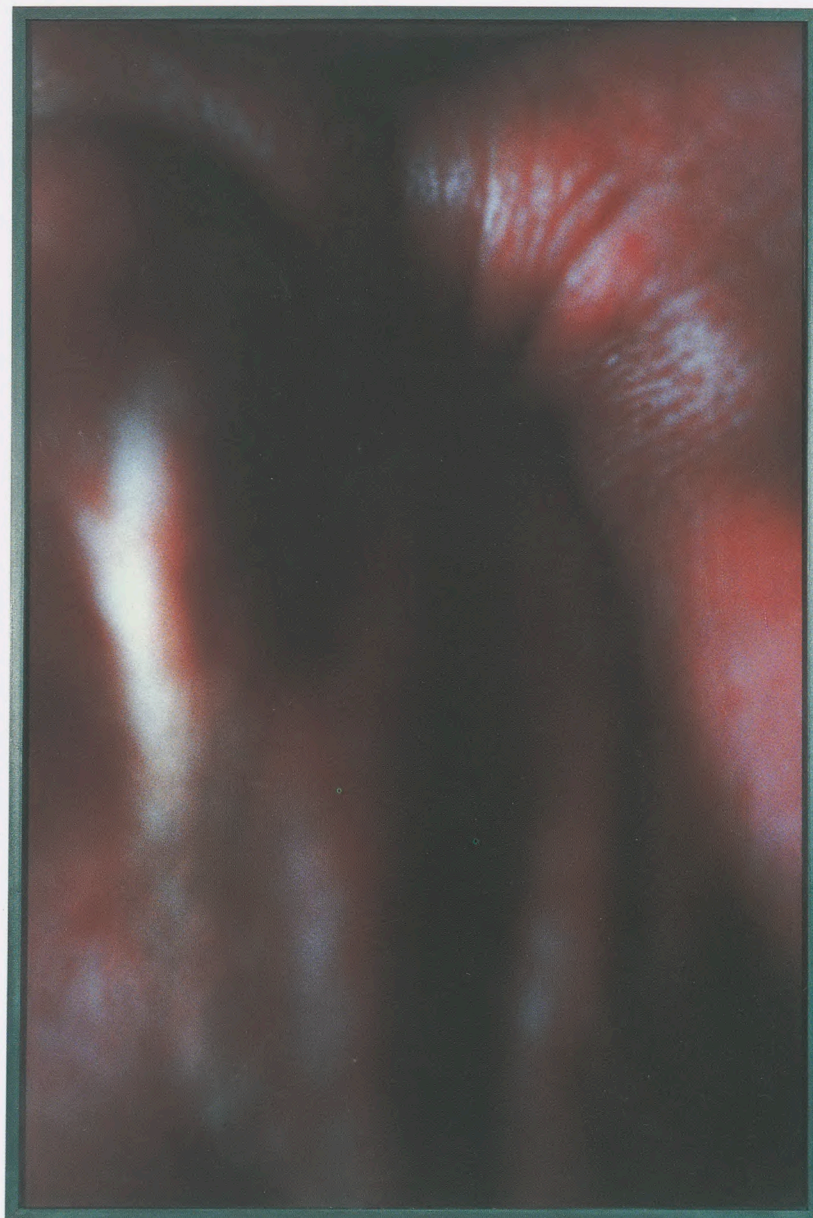
Curiously enough, against the still life a gesture here is set, against the irritating rash of narrative the stillness. Reflection and exegesis hold each other in checkmate. In the outstretched index finger, in the clenched first, the reprimand becomes tangible. Avoidance becomes all that the picture intercepts prematurely in the discursive. The ironizing effect, *slowness*, a particular characteristic of the artist Thomas Florschuetz is especially helpful in this. Left behind art the beloved systems anatomy, psychology, literature, contemporary history, all the tales whose realistic agent photography has now already been for more than 150 years. What we see are timid traces of a ruse against death through abundance of meaning.

The totally banal (»This is that«) and the symbolic (»This stands for that«): in Florschuetz's photographic panels, in the sharply composed section they fall together and form something uncertain, hybrid, the longer one looks at it, the more suspenseful, the human body as concrete puzzle.

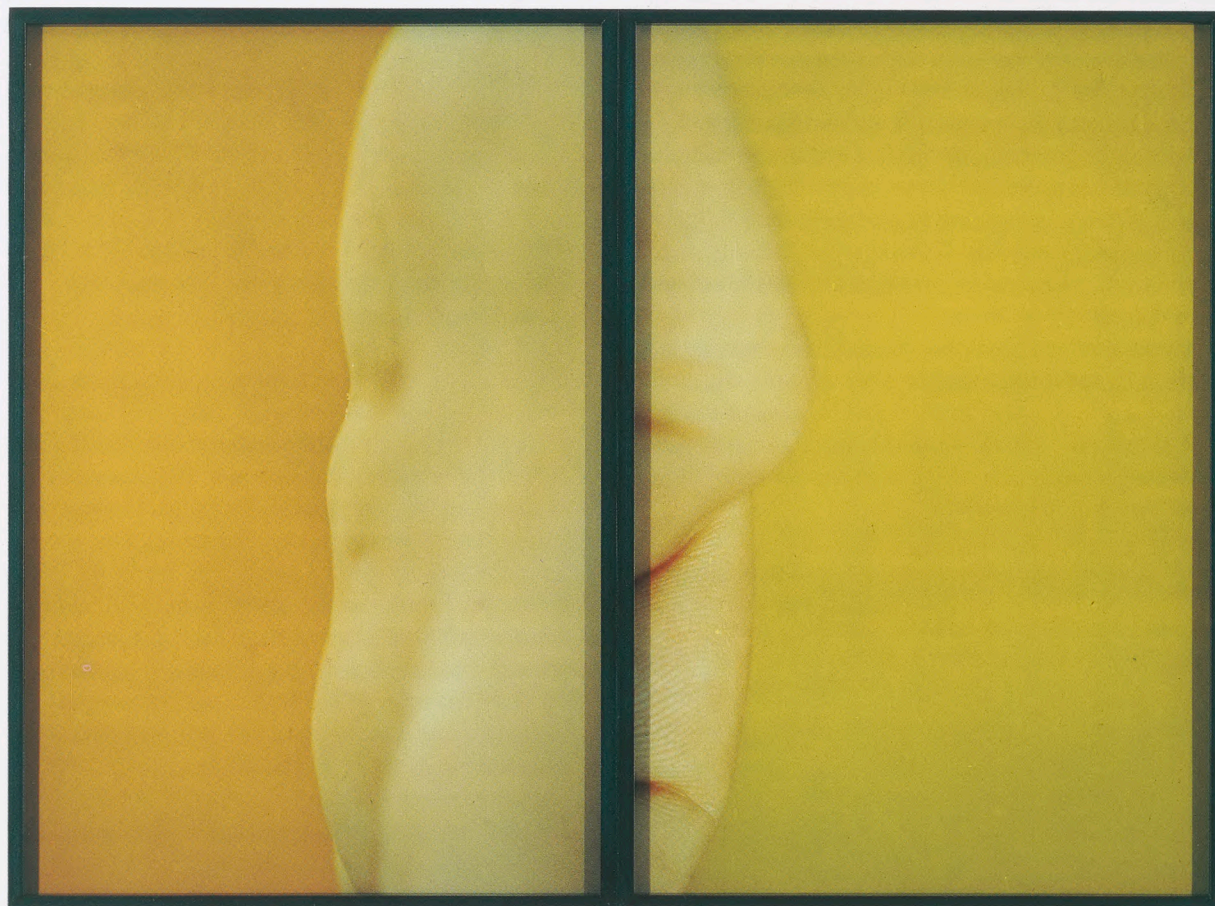
What, however, is meant here by concrete? According to its definition, the concrete is that which is perceptible to the senses, the clearly graspable, the vivid. Often mis-



Untitled – Diptych No. 52, 1991
C-print, 181,5 x 243 cm



Weigerung (Refusal), 1991
C-print, 181,5 x 121,5 cm



Untitled – Diptych No. 35, 1989/91
C-print, 106,5 x 143 cm

used, especially by philosophy, the word stood in Latin first of all for the »grown together«. In addition, there it has also meant coagulated, condensed, rigid. *Dolor concretus*, as the tearless pain was called, long before Christ, the savior and the moral consequences.

The tearless pain and the unseeing eye belong to one another in the eye parts to which Florschuetz always comes back. If one imagines the eye, like a black hole to the fright of viewers, it becomes suddenly clear, however, how much the forgotten is bound up with the senses. The body itself contributes to the disappearance of the world. Does one want to blame the artist if he now turns this magic spot into a showplace of his minute studies?

Photography as a medium of distance, photographing as working on alienation, on making the all-too-near visible; it does not take much to recognize that Thomas Florschuetz is directing his steps in such a direction.

Every seven years the body is a complete other, unrelated to the skin, the fingernails reflect their own flesh like a mirror.

Is there a form clarity that causes the pain to appear on this side of Expressionism and the cathartic fog, in the indifference, in the most exact regard for example, lusterless, in the pure surface tension? Is there an aesthetic of the mute pain this side of the metaphor of *thorn in the flesh*? Here it is.

Durs Grünbein

Translated by Ken Stillman

(e.) Twin Gabriel

Letter about the ideal everyday existence and the return of the human being as an ornament

Dear Frankolin Hassengier (Nr. 1028),

The sum of the parts does not equal a whole. But every whole can be divided. Regardless of how small it is. Regardless of how much energy it costs. Conscious violence is a form of energy, and as such, a mixture. It is directed at the division of a whole. For physicians, butchers, and a few eccentrics, living bodies are the objects of this not always easy division assignment. This application of force requires two parts – one that exerts power, and one upon which power is exerted. It is often overlooked that both parts can often lie within one body. They can be located with one consciousness.

Proceeding on the assumption that we as bodies in three-dimensional space are quite mobile, one could construct a concept of freedom. Freedom would mean the ability to refrain from doing something that is generally possible. Time, nevertheless, compensates for all variability of spatial existence by dictating to us to the direction in which we have to move – assuming we venture to move at all. Perhaps we cling to time too tenaciously, like a piece of chewing gum that has been spit out and trampled flat on asphalt. Blackish, flattened globs of consciousness, vulnerable to a possible earthquake caused by the grinding of the earth's tectonic plates, destined for an end courtesy of a flame thrower from city maintenance.

Is the double helix of the DNA a microfilm belonging to some intergalactical secret service, rattling unchecked through ITS projector, projecting us on the screen of time? There we would be trapped like cartoon figures and would, with our long noses, short legs and helpless hopping-about, arouse laughter from the heavenly hosts on furlough or in the military hospital.

One thing is clear: we cannot go backwards in time; we can only move forwards according to the rules that do not allow us any latitude.

We have no other choice but to structure and divide time. The division results in a concept of order within which we are used to finding our way around. Indeed,

something we can never be sure even exists outside of our imaginative faculty is cut to shreds – but the dissection of time into comprehensible pieces gives us a tool to help us construct an ideal everyday existence – an ideal banality, as I like to call these instructions for the experiment – out of our lives.

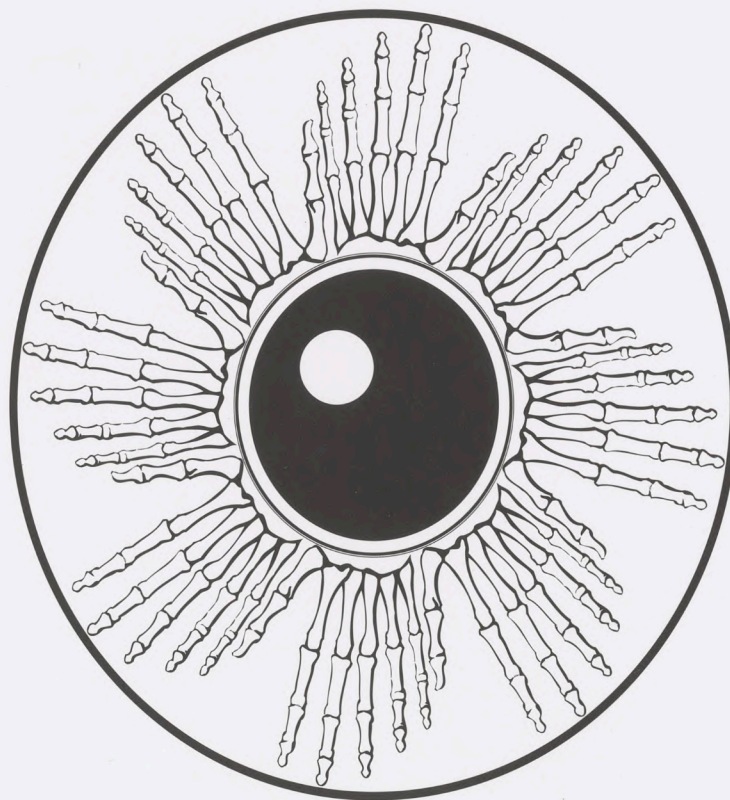
The use of violence is an extension of our experiment in ideal everyday existence that is difficult to control. Violence throws the conditions of the experiment into disorder. It pulls the rug out from under our well-devised systems – which, after all, are not capable of proving anything except their own existence – causing them to tumble into meaninglessness. It is possible for time to be stopped for a biological apparatus which happens into an order which is foreign to it, which it threatens too deeply. At the cost of its own life it is incorporated into this order, even if this order is merely a delusion of the same. Or it is the longing for endless but lonely peaks – the endeavor to prevent the decay of a sensation by keeping a supply in the refrigerator of an oddly-organized household of feelings.

Love can easily go bad. And lust is its mold. Research and sex murders have a lot in common. But more about that later.

Love –

(e.) Twin Gabriel

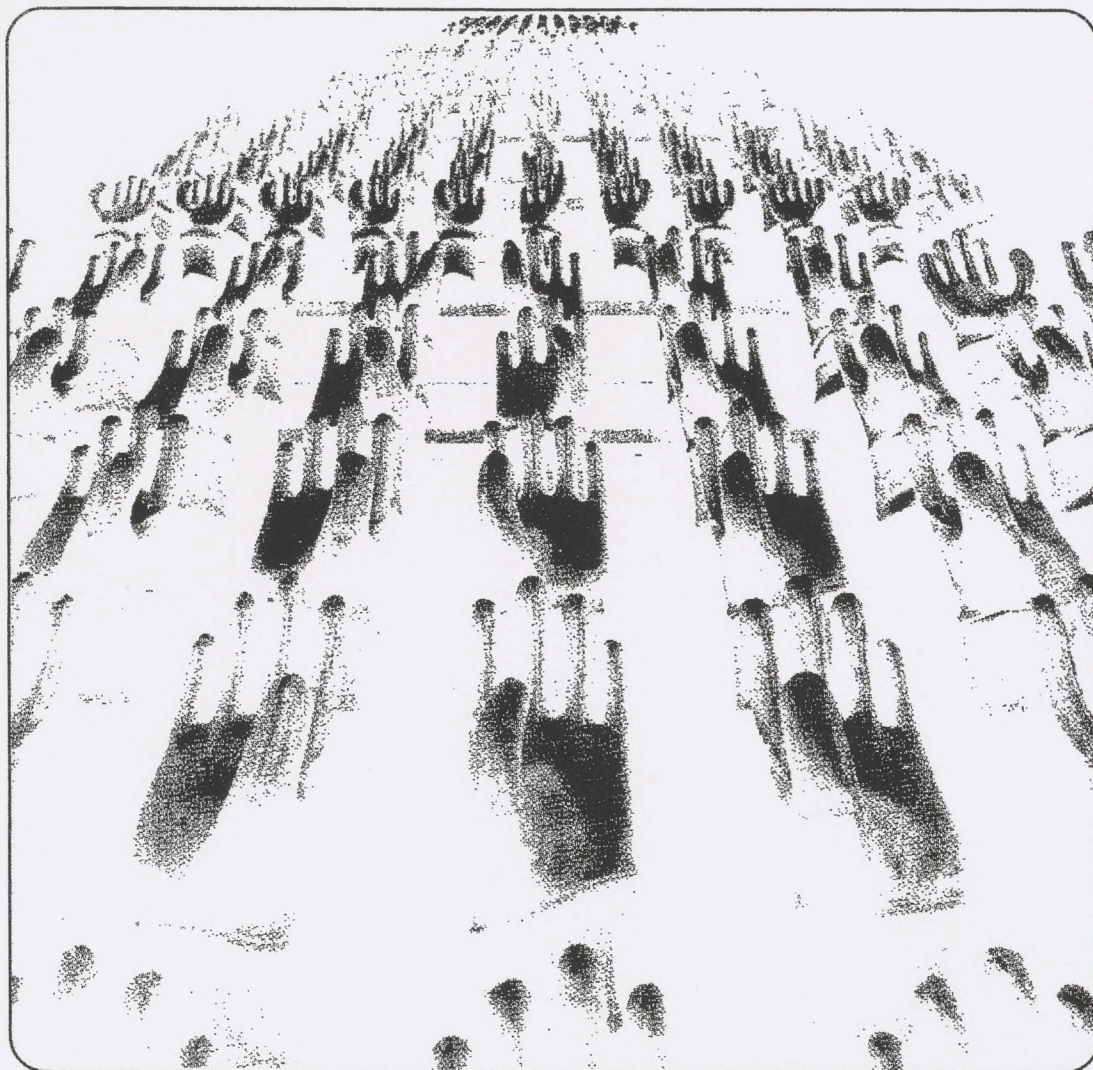
Translated by William Chaney



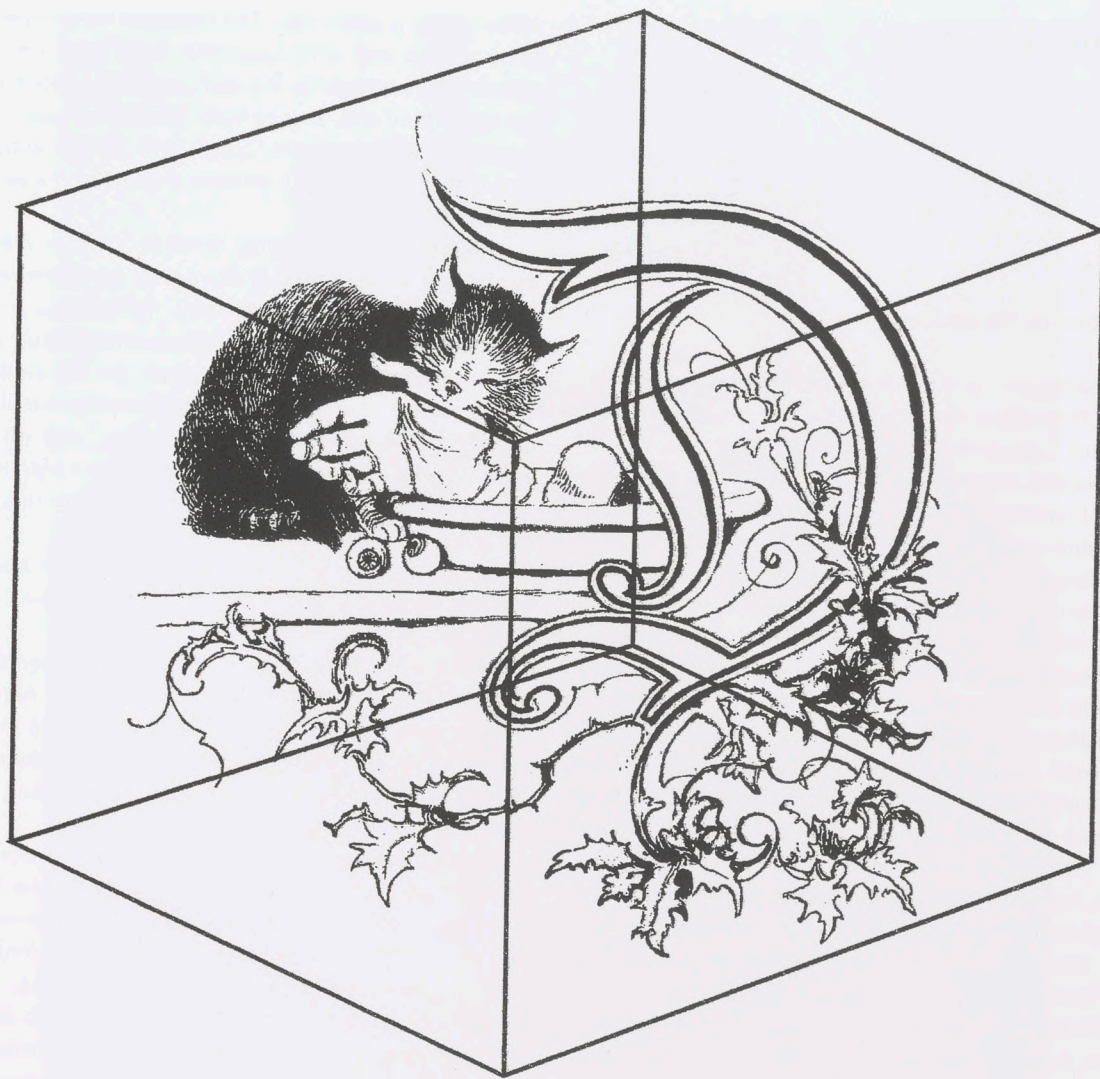
An Anatomical Experiment, 1992
Draft of "Various Balls of Meaning"



Various Balls of Meaning, 1992
 16 hanging lamps with spherical globes,
 35 cm in diameter each, blue stickers (pictures
 and proper names), Berlinische Galerie, Berlin



You and Danger, 1990
Diffuse view of 275 latex gloves and proper
names, Feuersozietät Berlin-Schöneberg



An Orderly Room, 1992
Draft of "Kambriumkonserven" (Cambrian Preserves), inspired by motifs of the Brothers Grimm

Raimund Kummer

Das Rätsel der Rosenknospe*

Rosebud is a watchword in Orson Welles famous film *Citizen Kane* which the protagonist, the newspaper magnate Kane, incessantly mumbles on his death bed. Who or what rosebud is remains a mystery throughout the entire film. Not until the very end, in the last shot, do we find out that, oddly enough, Rosebud was the sled with which Kane played as a child before having been suddenly separated from his parents. Thus rosebud stands for lost times and for the expulsion from the paradise of childhood. This is, however, merely hinted at in a scene which is also the final fade out of the film.

Analogous to *Citizen Kane* the title of Raimund Kummer's work *rosebud* does not provoke immediate, distinct conclusions. Instead it poses a riddle because in this case the name stands for a strange two-part ensemble. It is a seven meter long oversized ivy vine in bronze with 26 leaves, some of them large, growing over the floor. The pointed end of the huge vine protrudes approximately one meter into the air, as if it were searching for a holding point from which to grow vertically higher. The huge ivy growth, lacking a pedestal, takes on an unrestrained presence in the room and is more reminiscent of a colossal gravestone fragment than of an autonomous sculpture. It is as if a mausoleum had lost a part of its symbolic overgrowth.

Indeed, since antiquity great significance has been attached to ivy as a symbol of loyalty and life after death. The plant of Dionysus, it crowned the heads of the maenads, as well as encircling their thyrsus scepter. Even today, ivy, which is green all year round, adorns graves, a living blanket of the ephemeral. In the romantic association of ruins in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries ivy, growing over moribund architectural fragments and inducing melancholy, takes on a significance which is not to be underestimated: Eternal life blossoms out of the ruins.

Conscious of this meaning, Raimund Kummer seems to have made a cast bronze piece from nature, thereby wanting to continue in a line of tradition extending from Andrea Riccio to Giuseppe Penone. However it is worth-

while to take a closer look. The leaves all have exactly the same veining and were apparently made from the same modul. The prototype for this leafy vine is not nature itself, but rather third-rate, second-hand nature. Surrogate ivy, it is a vine made out of wire, plastic and printed fabric, the kind that can be found in window displays or cheaply decorated restaurants.

Kummer gives this rather loveless imitation a monumental and detailed form in bronze. By using the casting method and its patinate artificiality, he ennobles a rather ridiculous plastic left-over of a dionysian tradition which was once taken seriously. Here culture and nature do not merely appear in a forceful and emotionally united dual opposition; what also emerges is the fact that what we would like to accept as nature is never more than its image, its concept, its surrogate and the idea of its loss, long corrupted by cheap signs.

In this manner, Kummer's bronze monument also succeeds in recalling and clarifying the indirect essence of our distance from what we call nature.

But that is not all. For while we learn to switch our contemplation of dimensions and referents, as Alice and Gulliver once did, and are expected to concede to the artificiality of the third-hand nature of the ivy, we discover a shining red rectangular surface lying on the floor, overgrown by the creeping plant.

What appears at first to be an oversized photo of an unusually red soft fruit — a vegetal analogy to the foliage — and then intermittently an endoscopic photo of a curled up embryo inside the womb reveals itself after longer inspection to be a monumental photograph of an ear. Yes, it is a left ear, perhaps that of the artist lit up from behind, so that it seems to be able to light up from inside. The photographic blow-up and the almost macabre dramaturgy of light gives the familiar sense organ the appearance of a foreign body, and sheds light on analogical formula-

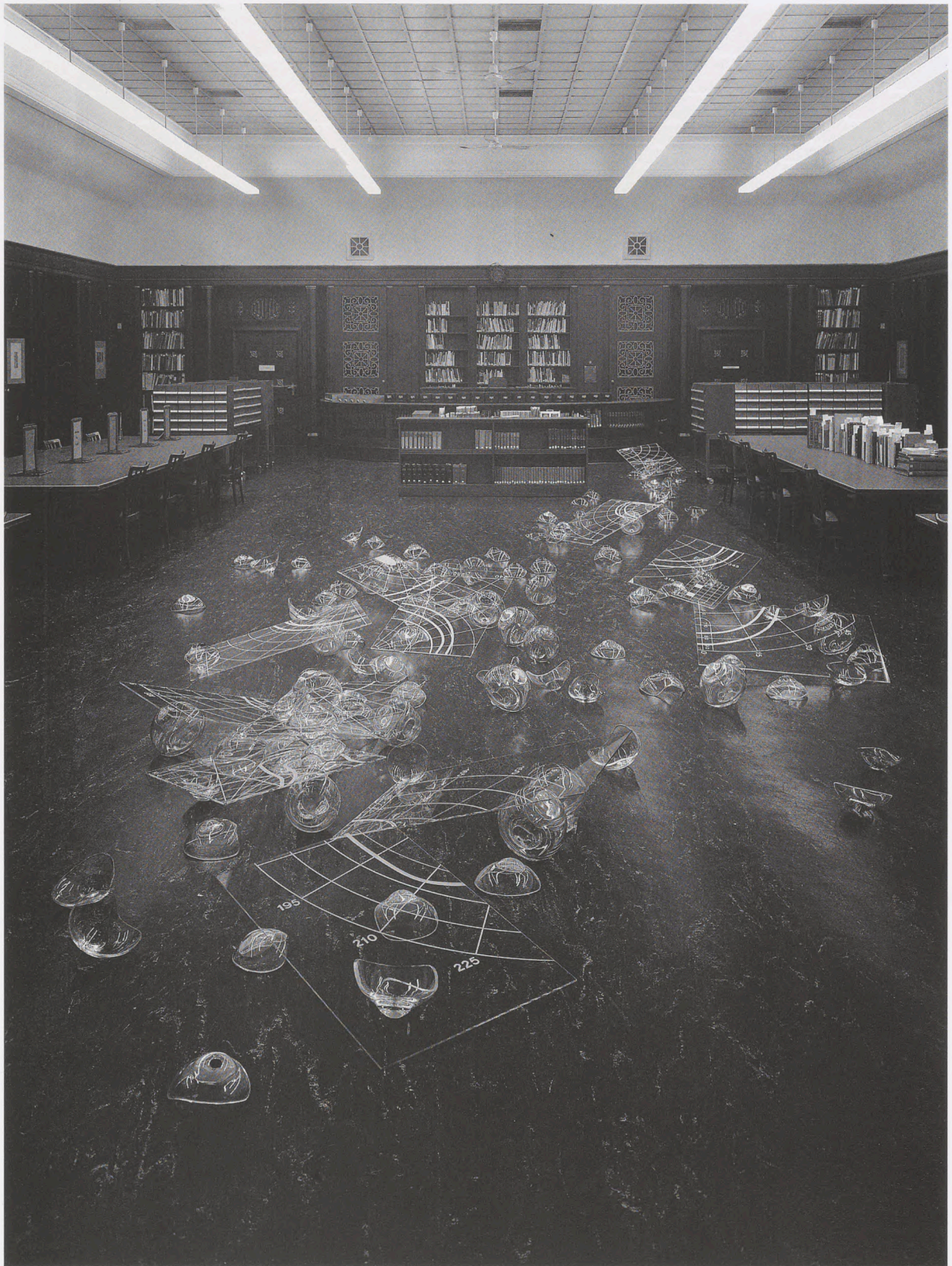
rosebud, 1991 ►
cast bronze, C-print/glass, 650 x 400 x 115 cm

mehr Licht (more Light), 1990/91 ►►
lead glass, sand-blasted float glass
50 x 400 x 800 cm

Untitled, Church of the Holy Cross, 1989 ►►►
sand-blasted, galvanised double T-girder (part of "reingelegt", 1980), high-voltage porcelain insulators, aluminium mounts, steel plates
224 x 780 x 80 cm

* The Riddle of the Rosebud







tions leading far beyond the laconic realization: "This is an ear." Removed from the context of the body and enlarged to this extent it can readily be transformed into something else. And even if, after longer contemplation, it finally proves unshakeably to be an ear, further associations are suggested: the severed ear of poor Vincent; the one found in the grass at the beginning of David Lynch's *Blue Velvet*; the ear which the apostle Peter chops off a roman soldier; or even that which the millionaire's son Paul Getty had to surrender to show that he was alive. Thus it simultaneously signifies self-mutilation, the dismemberment of a corpse and the amputated sense organ of a hostage. But why of all things an ear? And what is its relation to the overgrown bronze context?

In the antique imagination the ear was considered the location of the memory. The organ which can most directly receive the world. A sense organ which, like the eye, does not require tactile proximity to the perceived, but is capable of receiving it from a distance. In some early depictions of the annunciation, the Virgin Mary has an unnaturally large ear through which she can, simultaneously hearing and obeying, receive both the message of the angel and therewith Christ. Yes, the ear is a female sense organ whose external form is that of a Venus shell and consequently the female sex. In Marian symbology it is the medium which enables the word of God to become flesh.

Therefore the ear has historico-culturally always been seen as a female even virginal organ, an orifice through which direct access to the spirit, the soul, reason and thus the memory lies.

And of all things a large Cibachrome of an artist's ear photographed in isolation becomes the object of an analysis in which memory and perception are the focus of attention.

Thus ivy and human sense organs enter into an unusual symbiosis: The ear seems to perceive the ivy in its own manner by hearing it; whereas the ivy simultaneously grows over, protects and devours the ear. Alternately, the green vine itself seems to have sensuous capabilities at its disposal. It listens by nestling its ear onto the ground; creeping, it scrutinizes the room. As if by chance – though chance does not really exist in an artistic sense – Raimund Kummer came across a poem by Theodor Däubler, which Arno Schmidt dealt with in *Zettels Traum*.

The Ivy Vine

There on the Gothic palace the ivy
winds its way up to the marble balcony:
Its shadowy being resembles a spy,
somehow seized by a desire for revenge.
Growing, it is as if it gropes its way upward,
to find out who lives in the castle
and if betrayal is really worthwhile:
It already beckons with a free bough!
Now the moon peers around a high comer:
and look, a woman emerges from behind the panes,
what keeps her there so pale in one place?
The ivy must sprout many more branches,
so it can carry out its reconnoitering path:
the things die out, the riddles remain.

Relating the emblems of ear and ivy with the help of the designated title *rosebud* does indeed constitute a riddle. Here Kummer's peculiar use of combination, reminiscent of surrealist practices, not only provides the basis for a speculative endeavor dealing with the old dual opposition of nature and culture; it also stimulates the formation of analogies similar to the ones drawn between growth and the threatening eavesdropping attack of the shadowy ivy-being in Däubler's poem. Finally, an analogy also exists between the red, glowing ear and the evocative memory of the last scene from *Citizen Kane*.

In the end one image remains, constantly changing and thus encouraging from the viewer a melancholic response. This questioning, uncertain gaze ever constituting new sense dimensions incorporates this unique form of the grieving process: the revision of once meaningful values, the overlapping of various realities and finally the subtle transition from external to essentially internal images.

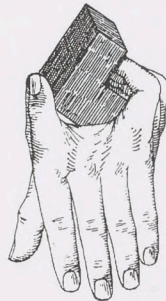
Peter Frieze

Translated by Johanna Bauman

Via Lewandowsky

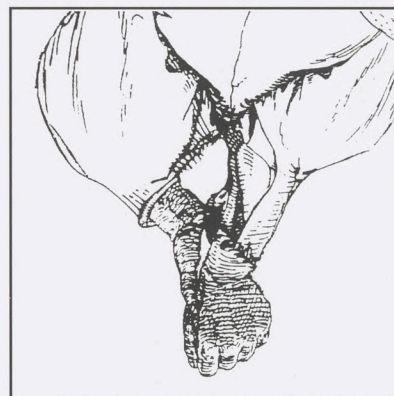
Counterselection

something must be very wrong

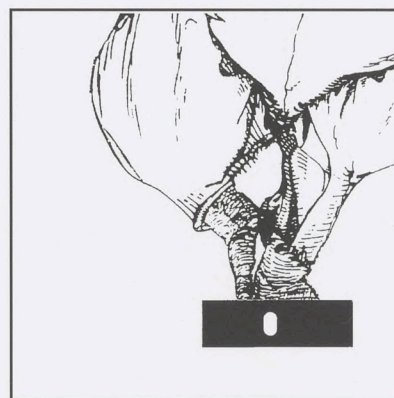
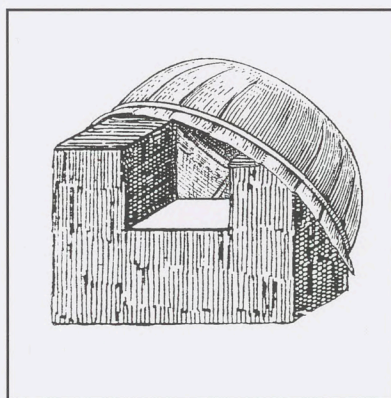


ask me now ... why?

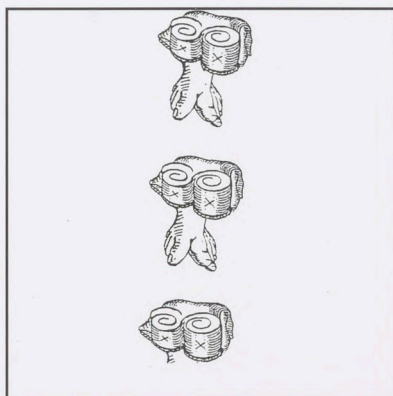
we won't have victims;
we need your willingness.



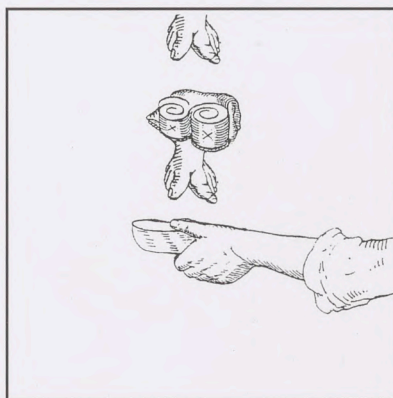
we are not giving up for anyone



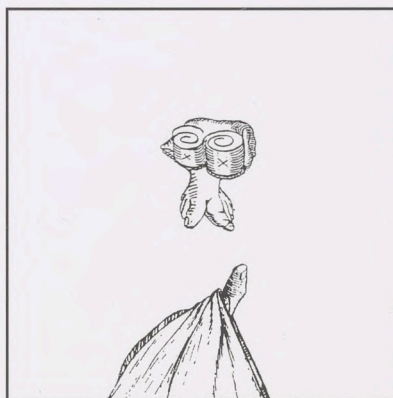
also the restless squaring
of the circle couldn't change
their mind.

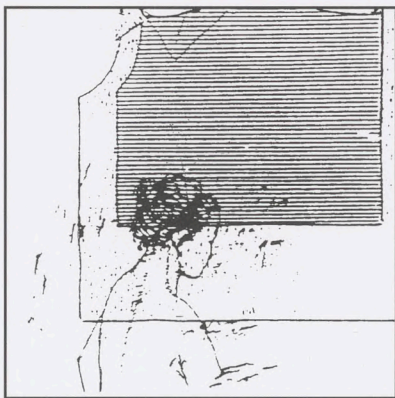


the impact of the outcroppings

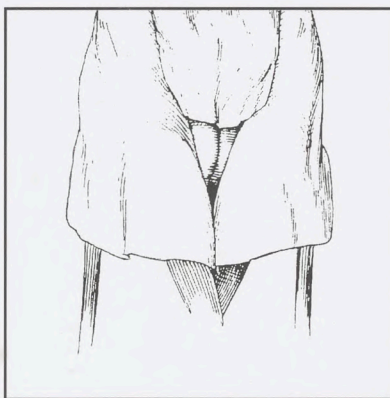


there is no end after the end





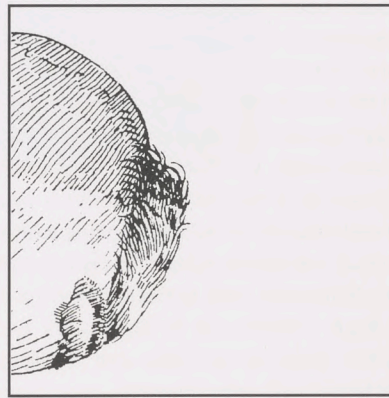
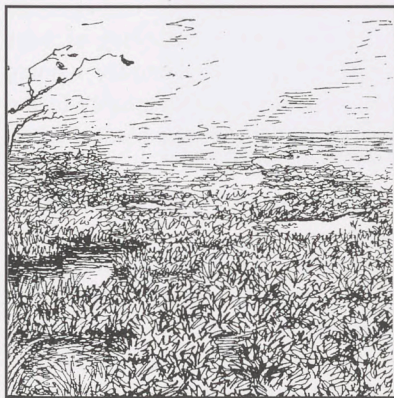
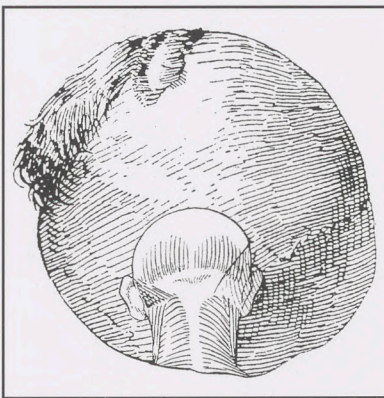
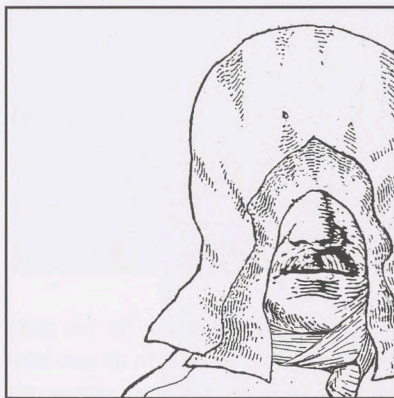
when itching in ears turns over
to an addiction



the blessed position of observation
became her fate.



Miss, have you seen the enemy?



Raffael Rheinsberg

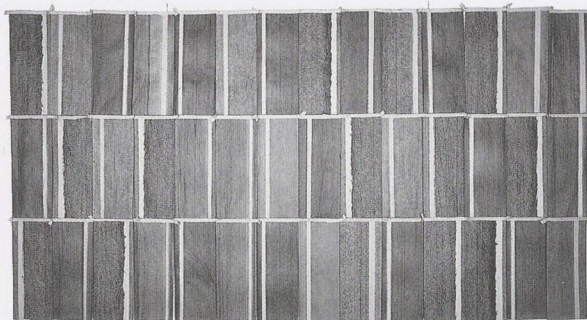
Trolling while Strolling

An integral part of the outward appearance of our society, based on consumption and affluence, is the disappearance of things. This is accepted as the necessary and inevitable outcome of mass production which constantly makes real or apparent improvements on what is present. The discarded goods find their way either onto garbage dumps, or at best selected samples of them land in museums of technology, local history or cultural history. The bulk of these remnants, however, soon appear worthless and are eliminated. But what has been debased, destroyed and discarded does not lie.

For many years the Berlin artist Raffael Rheinsberg has been concerned with preserving the traces of a by-gone present, using objects and (hi)stories that record human living conditions.

Berlin is a place where recent history has always been present, a situation which has been reinforced by the opening of the borders. The city has numerous unused spaces, vacant lots and tracts of land slated for demolition which recall the devastation of World War II and the division brought about by the cold war. In these sectors Raffael Rheinsberg stumbles upon traces of the past which recount human existence and labor. A seeker of traces, Rheinsberg wanders between yesterday and today. In desolate parts of the city he looks for and finds relics of a suppressed past and orders his found objects into complex installations and assemblages. The political changes in the former GDR have given his "archeology of the everyday" access to a field of work, the magnitude of which remains barely graspable; for reformation has been accompanied by a headlong, sometimes even frenzied, radical transformation of society, making worthless rubbish out of useful and usable objects. In closed down industrial plants or abandoned army barracks the artist discovers signs of a culture – albeit one in dissolution and disappearance – which attest to shortage and restriction. On the site of deserted red army barracks near Oranienburg he found felt boots worn by a forced-labor battalion while loading cement and sand. The shabbiness of these boots tells of

the conditions under which the soldiers lived and worked. Yet even here where obligation and privation ruled Rheinsberg came across expressions of individualism. In two of the boots he found packs of Russian cigarettes which the soldiers had hidden there and eventually forgotten. In the city outside of the barracks the artist discovered a damaged neon sign which once advertised "Oranienburger Coffee". In his installation "Josef" he fastened the fragmentary advertising sign onto the wall above the pile of boots, whereby it takes on the quality of a warning sign bearing witness to the inhumane conditions under which the inhabitants of Oranienburg were forced to work. Indeed, Oranienburg has a history of inhumanity. During the Nazi period it was the site of the concentration camp Sachsenhausen into which above all prisoners from Berlin were deported. By titling the work "Josef" Rheinsberg wants to bring to mind Joseph Beuys and his use of felt. In Beuys' iconology felt has a special value because it is made out of organic raw materials and is capable of storing energy.



Rheinsberg likewise found the material for his large paper bag picture in army barracks. Soaked in oil and bitumen, the paper bags were used as packing material for the transport of wet sand. As a result of the impregnation process, the entirety of the picture, consisting of bags hanging alongside each other, shows vertically running bands and stripes which have a certain similarity to the transcendently abstract painting of Clyfford Still and Barnett Newman. In the exact course of the lines Rheinsberg also acknowledges a relationship to constructivist art of the Russian avant-garde.

Rheinsberg comprehends social relationships in a timely and systematic manner. He locates and fixates found objects, transforming them into works of art, in other words into graspable and discussable depictions of reality. Only then is a broad examination of reality possible, a reality which upon taking a closer look is not formed by economic interests alone, but inadvertently



◄▲ *Omsk - Tomsk - Nowosibirsk, Potsdam,*
Russian Barracks, 1991
found objects (paper bags soaked in oil)
300 x 400 cm



Für Salamander, Berlin 1991
found objects (6 suitcases filled with dyed
crocodile skins), 25 x 105 x 50 cm each

Oranienburg



Josef, Oranienburg, 1991/92
found objects (felt boots, neon sign)
10 x 500 x 150 cm

finds its expression in aesthetic formulations. The focus of Rheinsberg's work is humankind, its ability to be creative even in the most unfavorable circumstances and its expressions of resistance even under the signs of suppression and adversity. Rheinsberg is one of the few contemporary artists able to make the incomprehensible situation of current social changes concrete and visible in his works of art, particularly in the works produced after the opening of the wall. The installation "Für Salamander", for example, consisting of six suitcases filled with crocodile skins which were produced in East Berlin exclusively for western markets, demonstrates the virulence of his artistic idea, which is capable of exemplarily capturing the conflict between two very different social systems, albeit in a stop-action manner. This is all the more notable because currently in many other spheres of art there are indications of a general trivialization – extending from decoration to outward formalities – instead of grappling with social realities. Typical of Rheinsberg's method, as can be seen in the installation "Josef" as well as older works, is his personally invoked concept of order. The chaos of the objects, a product of their everyday paltriness, cannot be experienced or become meaningful until they are presented in the system of a field or placed in a suitable order. By means of this order the movability and dynamism at life's foundation become visible: the gift for improvisation in the production of waterproof bags for example, whose aesthetic form has certain similarities to works of art. Rafael Rheinsberg's artistic feat lies in initially becoming aware of such rather inconsequential relationships, unearthing them and imputing them with aesthetic expression through sculptural arrangement. In his art works Rheinsberg mediates his knowledge of social reality, the concreteness of which would be irrevocably lost if he did not preserve their traces. By reassembling debased materials he saves objects of being, encouraging reflection on what constitutes human dignity.

Peter Funken

Translated by Johanna Bauman

Eran Schaerf



one
man
with
a
bag
in
one
hand
and
three
newspaper
pieces
in
the
other
hand
looked
for
a
place
in
the
train
sat
and
laid
the
bag
on
the
floor
between
the
legs
and
looked
on
one
newspaper
piece
was
a
thin
black
frame
and
in
it
a
name

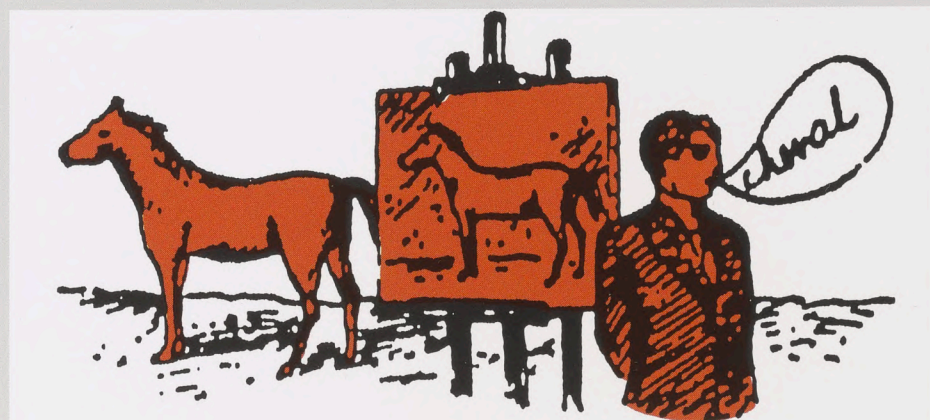
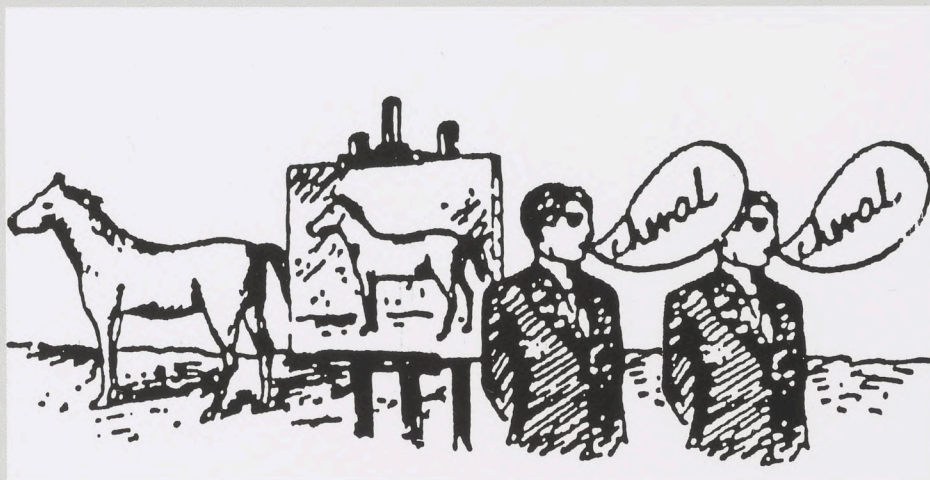
in
three
parts
and
two
dates
that
I
couldn't
remember
but
between
them
were
thirty
three
years
and
under
the
frame
it
was
possible
to
see
the
headline
of
the
congratulation
column
and
on
the
second
piece
was
a
thin
black
frame
and
in
it
a
name
in
three
parts

and
two
dates
that
I
couldn't
remember
but
think
that
between
them
were
thirty
three
years
and
nearby
were
two
names
of
two
places
far
from
each
other
and
the
man
was
playing
with
his
hair
mumbling
something
that
sounded
like
no
the
station

Schneider u. Sohn, *längen, kürzen, Rosen* ◀◀
(Tailor and Son, *lengthen, shorten, Roses*), 1991
Zwinger Galerie, Berlin

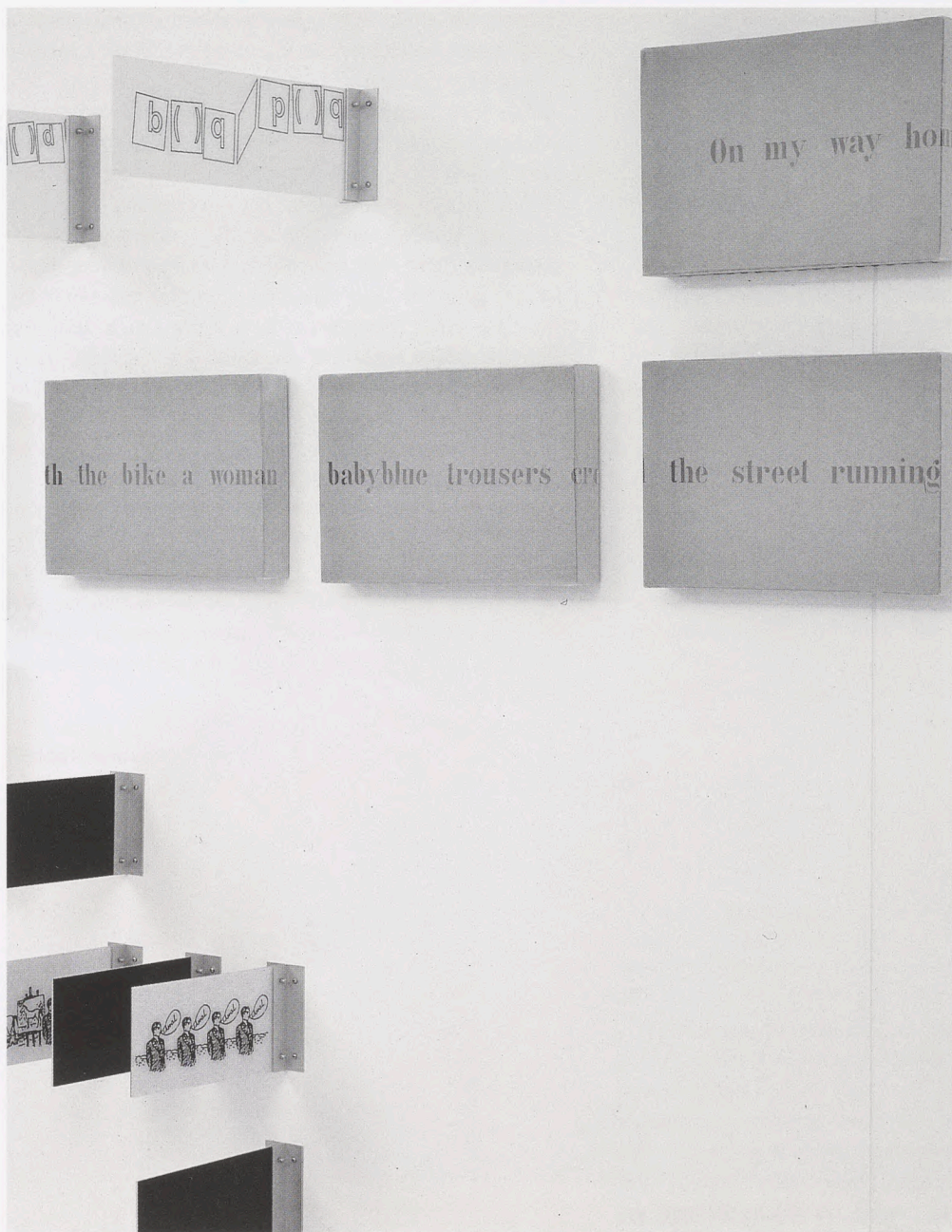
WRITTEN IN LANGUAGE, 1989 ◀
Impulse e.V., Hamburg

Cards, (part of WRITTEN IN LANGUAGE), 1989 ▶
two colors print, 11 x 20,6 cm





a b c society, 1990
paper, cardboard, photocopies, black-and-white
photographs, color photographs, plexiglass
18 parts, different sizes



Georg Zey

Is there anything which hasn't interested sculptors?: — anthropomorphism, verticality, deconstruction, reconstruction, the affinity for design, the effects of gravity, adhesion to the ground, carrying and supporting, implications of minimalism, and baroque complexity. Everything is possible, but by the same token, the dangers of the optical inertia of the materials have become more and more obvious. What has remained is the interest in the arcs of tension between open and closed form, between the outside and the inside, hollowness, massiveness and the tension of the surface. The demand for volume and a singular position in a space determine the autonomy of a sculpture.

George Zey's formative principles seem to want to take all of these things to heart and yet outwardly resist these totalitarian standards.

The inertia of the well-known does not prevent the artist from outsmarting sculptural platitudes, precisely because he employs his use of banal materials with conviction and in a straightforward manner.

A system of cross-references created by rubber bands, plastic spaghetti, tennis balls, marbles and miniature plastic cowboys leads to a three-dimensional flirt between the sculpture and the molecular model. The resulting filigree body, a product of a mumbling, monological dialogue between the micro- and macro-worlds, propagates itself in an internal conversation. But Zey is not a scientist. The autonomy of his work outweighs each and every connotation which has an outside reference and is a distraction from the laws inherent to the plastic event. Mushrooming internal structures, instability, fragility, as well as the inner stability of an energy carrier which is identical to itself, allow for questioning the interest in materiality and the circumstances of construction. It thereby becomes obvious that Zey is in search of the immediate relation to time and not merely assuming the pose of an indefatigably tinkering universal poet.

Zey possesses the freedom to consciously change his stance, but he clings tightly to the artistic point of view, the aim of which is to interlink the daily realm of experience with the geometrically measurable phenomenon of

"space". His works do not serve to enhance consciousness of the space itself; they are stumbling blocks on a journey of discovery through a bio-chemical construction kit. It is as if a shock-frozen cascade of processes — the contents of a message — had been returned to memory, in order to block forgetting. Though the secrets of chemical small talk remain mostly undisclosed, Zey's sculptures trigger a vibrating contact with the spatial continuum which enshrouds them. The work follows an equilibrium which accepts physical conditions and promotes the sensation that time flows through us, here a drop at a time and there as a tape loop; the check-out line becomes transformed into a place where self-determination is possible. Is this aesthetic revisionism? Certainly not as long as the paradoxical ambivalence of the beautiful searches for its withdrawal between bulges and hollows.

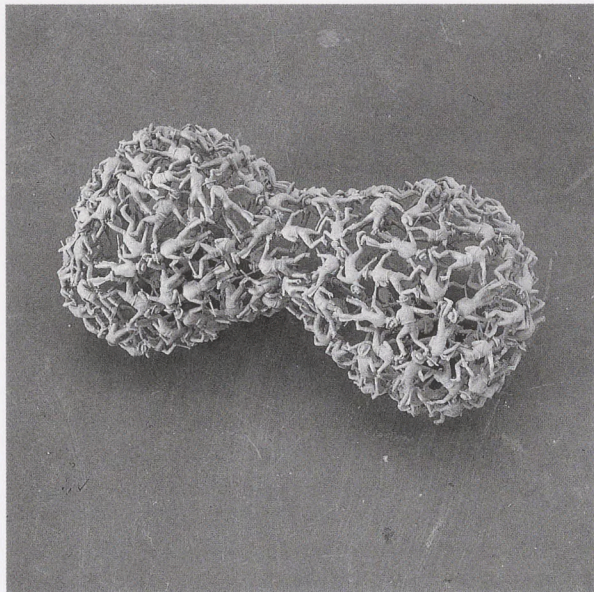
Employing the principles of tethering, stacking and coupling, which result in zones of adhesion and bonding, Zey has paid homage to a polymeric purism, which he nonetheless consistently ruptures. He avoids finished perfection and locates himself in an open system of insights, making it at any time possible to take off in innumerable directions.

Christoph Tannert

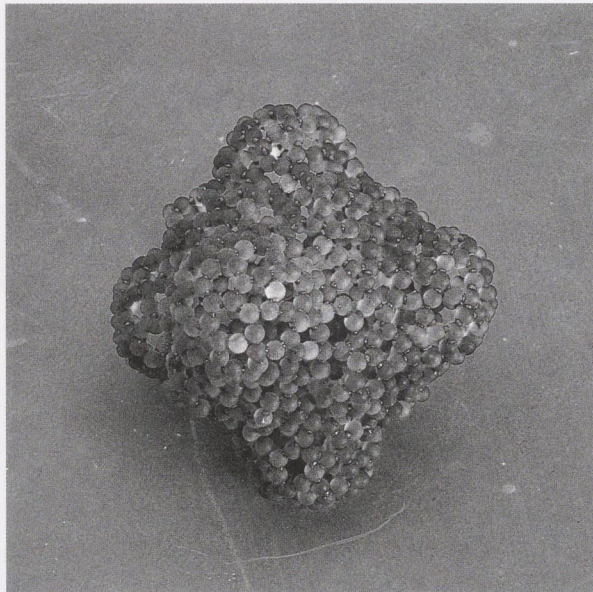
Translated by Johanna Bauman



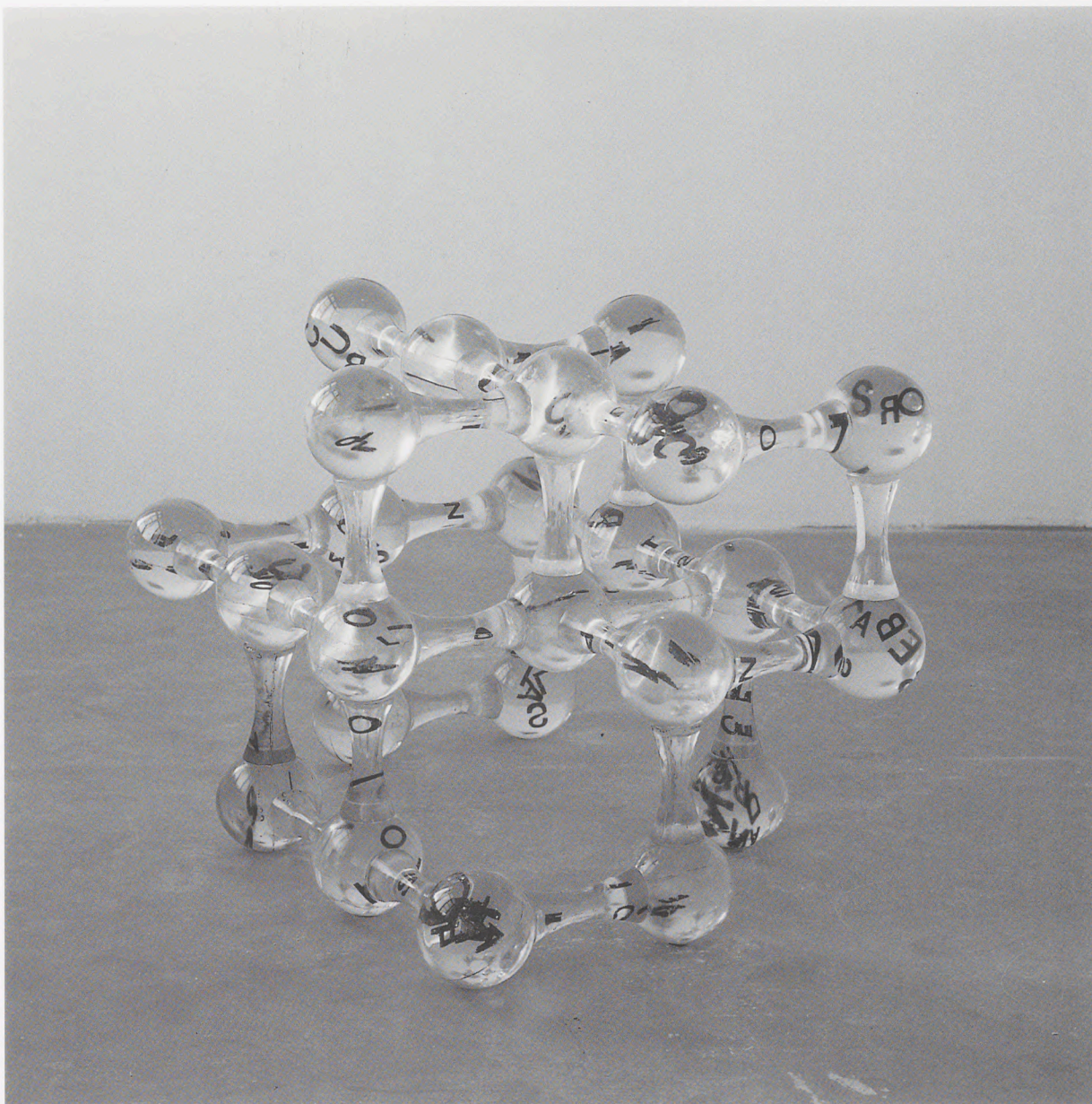
Untitled, 1992
PVC, 60 x 95 x 95 cm



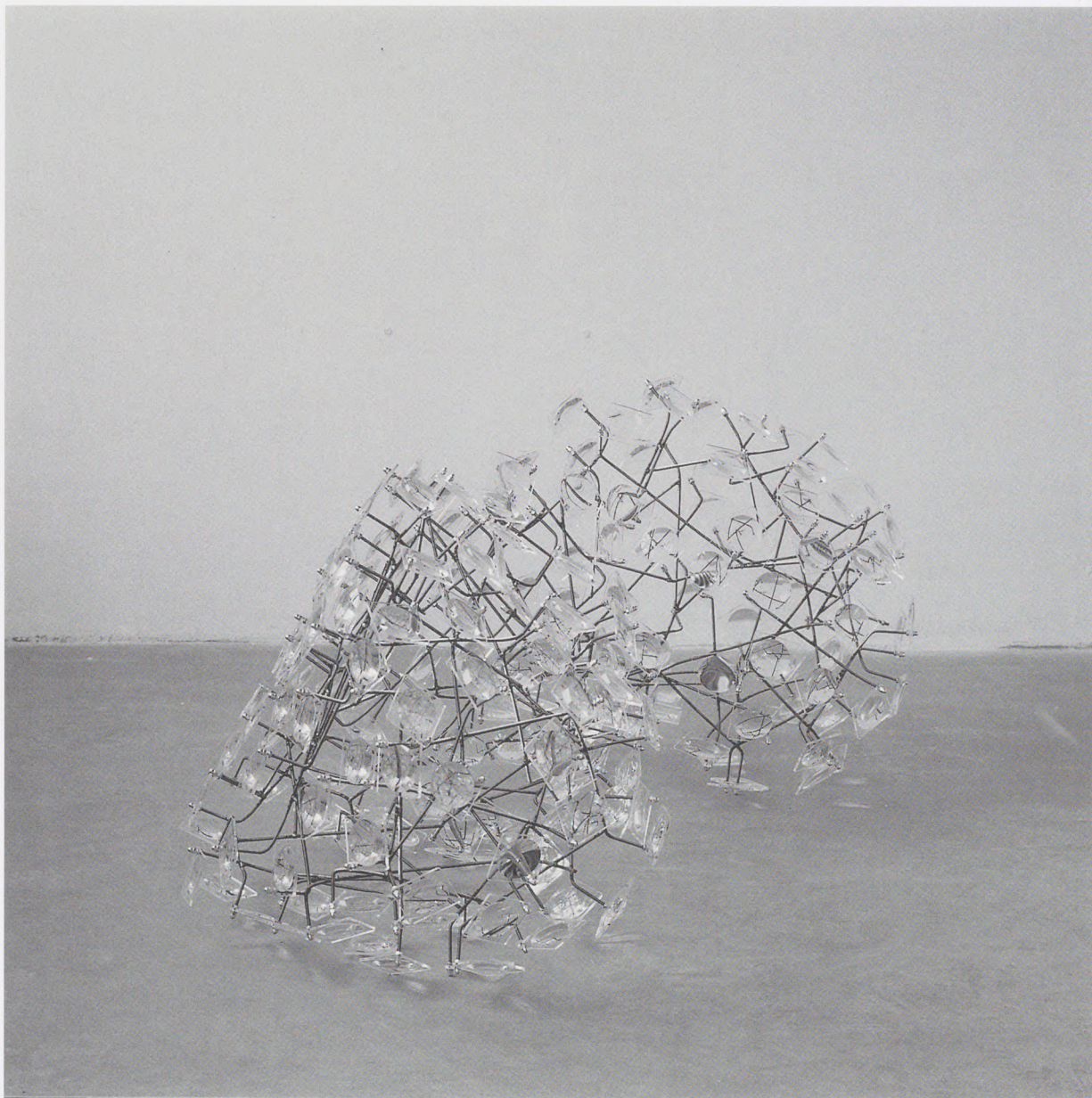
Untitled, 1990
PVC-cowboys, 21 x 47 x 27 cm



Untitled, 1992
glass marbles/adhesive, 27 x 30 x 30 cm



Was ihr wollt (What you will), 1991
cast epoxy resin/polyester letters
89 x 109 x 78 cm



Untitled, 1991
steel/magnifying glasses, 67 x 167 x 85 cm

Dieter Appelt

1935

born in Niemegek

student of music in Leipzig and Berlin
1959

student of experimental photography
under Heinz Hajek-Halke in Berlin
Dieter Appelt lives and works in Berlin
where he has been a professor at the
Hochschule der Künste since 1982.

Selected One Person Exhibitions:

1977

Galerie Nothelfer, Berlin

1978

Galerie Marzona, Düsseldorf

1980

Symposium International d'Art Performance, Lyon

1981

Galerie Springer, Berlin (catalogue)

Galerie Ufficio dell'Arte Creatis, Paris
(catalogue)

1983

Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich
(catalogue)

1985

Galerie Hermeyer, Munich (catalogue)

1986

Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam

1987

Triennale Internationale de la Photographie, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Charleroi
(catalogue)

1988

Galerie Baudoin Lebon, Paris

1989

Centre National de la Photographie, Palais
de Tokyo, Paris (catalogue)

1990

Galerie Rudolf Kicken, Cologne (with
Eva Hesse)

IMATGE PRIMORDIAL, Centre d'Art Santa
Monica, Barcelona (catalogue)

1991

Galerie Springer, Berlin (catalogue)

Selected Group Exhibitions:

1980

Rencontres internationales de la photographie, Arles

1981

AUTOPORTRAITS, Musée National d'Art
Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou,

Paris (catalogue)

ASPECTS DE L'ART AUJOURD'HUI, Musée

Rath, Geneva (catalogue)

1983

TODESBILDER (Images of Death), Städtische
Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich

1986

SELF PORTRAIT-PHOTOGRAPHY, National
Portrait Gallery, London (catalogue)

THÉÂTRE DES RÉALITÉS, Musée pour la Photographie, Metz and Palais de Tokyo, Paris
(catalogue)

1987

SIX CONTEMPORARIES FROM BERLIN, Hara
Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo
(catalogue)

1988

L'IMAGERIE DE MICHEL TOURNIER, Musée
National d'Art Moderne, Paris (catalogue)

CONCEPT ET IMAGINATION, Stedelijk Museum,
Amsterdam at the Institut Néerlandais, Paris
(catalogue)

1989

VANISHING PRESENCE, Walker Art Center,
Minneapolis (catalogue)

PHOTOGRAPHY NOW, The Victoria + Albert
Museum, London (catalogue)

KUNST IN BERLIN VON 1900 BIS HEUTE

(Art in Berlin from 1900 to the Present),
Centro de Arte Moderna, Calouste
Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon and
Nationalgalerie, Berlin (catalogue)

DONATIONS DANIEL CORDIER, Musée
National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges
Pompidou, Paris (catalogue)

1990

GEGENWART EWIGKEIT - SPUREN DES TRANSCENDENTEN IN DER KUNST UNSERER ZEIT
(PresentEternity - Traces of the Transcendental in Contemporary Art), Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin (catalogue)

AMBIENTE BERLIN (Berlin Ambience), XLIV
Biennale di Venezia (catalogue)

List of Exhibited Works:

URANUS, 1990

10 photographs, 100 x 80 cm each

Courtesy of Galerie Rudolf Kicken, Cologne

DIE SCHATTEN ERINNERN AN NICHTS, 1991

(The Shadows Remind of Nothing)

6 photographs, 150 x 115 cm each

Courtesy of Galerie Rudolf Kicken, Cologne

Armando

1929

born in Amsterdam

Armando has been living and working in
Berlin since 1979.

Selected One Person Exhibitions:

1981

Galerie Springer, Berlin

Studio Carlo Grossetti, Milan

Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (catalogue
with Stedelijk van Abbe Museum, Eindhoven)

1982

Stedelijk Van Abbe Museum, Eindhoven
(catalogue, see above)

1984

Nationalgalerie, Berlin (catalogue with
Westfälischer Kunstverein, Münster and
Städtisches Museum Abteiberg,
Mönchengladbach)

Westfälischer Kunstverein, Münster
(catalogue, see above)

Städtisches Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach
(catalogue, see above)

XLI Biennale di Venezia

Institut Néerlandais, Paris (catalogue
with Städtische Kunsthalle Mannheim)
Städtische Kunsthalle Mannheim
(catalogue, see above)

1985

Galerie Tilly Haderek, Stuttgart

Museum Boymans-van Beuningen,
Rotterdam (catalogue)

Kunstverein in Hamburg (catalogue)

1986

Collection d'Art, Amsterdam

1987

Kunstverein Freiburg, Freiburg i. Br. (catalogue
together with Turske & Turske, Zurich)

Turske & Whitney Gallery, Los Angeles

Galerie Löhrl, Mönchengladbach

Turske & Turske, Zurich

Zellermeier Galerie, Berlin

1988

Gatodo Gallery, Tokyo

Musée de Brou, Bourg-en-Bresse
(catalogue)

1989

The Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh
(catalogue)

Centraal Museum, Utrecht (Armando, The
Berlin Years, The Hague 1989)

Steendrukkerij Amsterdam

Nouvelles Images, The Hague
1990
Kunsthalle Mücsarnok, Budapest
Kunsthalle der Stadt Nürnberg, Nuremberg
(catalogue)
Turske & Turske, Zurich (Sculptures)
1991
Galerie Fahlbusch, Mannheim
Kunstraum Falkenstein, Hamburg
(catalogue)

Selected Group Exhibitions:

1982
documenta 7, Kassel (catalogue)
1984
AN INTERNATIONAL SURVEY OF RECENT PAINT-
ING AND SCULPTURE, The Museum of
Modern Art, New York (catalogue)
Fifth Biennale of Sydney (catalogue)
OUVERTURE, Castello di Rivoli, Turin
(catalogue)
1986
EUROPA/AMERIKA, Museum Ludwig, Cologne
(catalogue)
1987
BERLINART 1961-1987, The Museum of
Modern Art, New York and Museum of
Modern Art, San Francisco (catalogue)
WALDUNGEN (Woodlands), Akademie der
Künste, Berlin (catalogue)
SIX CONTEMPORARIES FROM BERLIN, Hara
Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo
(catalogue)
1988
MELTEM, le Magasin-Centre National d'Art
Contemporain de Grenoble (catalogue)
ZWISCHEN SCHWARZ & WEISS (Between
Black & White), Neuer Berliner Kunstverein,
Berlin (catalogue)
BALKON MIT FÄCHER. 25 JAHRE BERLINER
KÜNSTLERPROGRAMM DES DAAD (Balcony
with fan. 25 Years of the DAAD Artist Pro-
gram), Akademie der Künste, Berlin and
DuMont Kunsthalle, Cologne (catalogue)
1989
KUNST IN BERLIN VON 1900 BIS HEUTE (Art
in Berlin from 1900 to the Present), Centro
de Arte Moderna, Calouste Gulbenkian
Foundation, Lisbon and Nationalgalerie,
Berlin (catalogue)
1991/92
DIE WÜRDE UND DER MUT (Dignity and Cour-
age), Galerie Nothelfer, Berlin (catalogue)
INTERFERENZEN - KUNST AUS WESTBERLIN
1960 - 1990 (Interferences - West Berlin Art

1960 - 1990), Museum of Foreign Art,
Riga/Latvia and Marmorpalais, St.Peters-
burg/Russia (catalogue)

List of Exhibited Works:

GEFECHTSFELD (Battlefield) 4/2/1987
oil on canvas, 165 x 225 cm
Courtesy of the artist

GEFECHTSFELD (Battlefield) 4/10/1987
oil on canvas, 165 x 225 cm
Courtesy of the artist

GEFECHTSFELD (Battlefield) 4/22/1987
oil on canvas, 165 x 225 cm
Courtesy of the artist

DIE LEITER (The Ladder), 7/31/1990
oil on canvas, 250 x 198 cm
Courtesy of Turske & Turske, Zurich

Thomas Florschuetz

1957
born in Zwickau
1981
moved to East Berlin
1987
First Prize for young European Photography
1988
moved to West Berlin
Artist in Residence, Lightwork, Syracuse,
New York
Grant from the Senator for Cultural Affairs,
Berlin
Thomas Florschuetz lives and works in Ber-
lin.

Selected One Person Exhibitions:

1987
HAND IM HERZ (Hand in your Heart), Atelier
Volker Henze, East Berlin
Museum Folkwang, Essen
Maison de la Roquette, Arles
Galerie Neue Räume, West Berlin
1988
Galerie du Jour, Paris (catalogue)
Anderson Gallery, VCU, Richmond, VA
(catalogue)
1989
Aschenbach Galerie, Amsterdam
PPS-Galerie, Hamburg
Montserrat Gallery, Montserrat College of
Art, Beverly, MA

1990
Galerie du Jour, Paris (catalogue)
Grey Art Gallery, East Carolina University,
Greenville, NC
1991
Stadtgalerie Saarbrücken (catalogue)
L'Imagerie, Lannion
1992
Galerie vier, Berlin (catalogue)
Galerie Nikolaus Sonne, Berlin (catalogue)
Galerie du Jour, Paris (catalogue)

Selected Group Exhibitions:

1987
OUT OF EASTERN EUROPE: PRIVATE PHOTO-
GRAPHY, List Visual Art Center, MIT, Cam-
bridge, MA (catalogue)
PREIS FÜR JUNGE EUROPÄISCHE FOTOGRAFIE
(Prize for Young European Photography),
Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt/Main
1988
FIGUR & ZEICHEN (Figure & Sign), Staatliche
Kunstsammlungen Cottbus (catalogue)
YOUNG EUROPEAN PHOTOGRAPHERS,
Houston Foto Fest '88, Houston, TX
SMALL SCALE, Rosa Esman Gallery, New
York
1989
DAS MEDIUM DER FOTOGRAFIE IST BERECH-
TIGT, DENKANSTÖSSE ZU GEBEN (The Photo-
graphic Medium is Entitled to Provoke
Thought), Kunstverein Hamburg (catalogue)
DAS PORTRAIT IN DER ZEITGENÖSSISCHEN
PHOTOGRAPHIE (The Portrait in Contempo-
rary Photography), Kulturfabrik Mainz
(catalogue)
PHOTOGRAPHIE ALS KUNST - KUNST ALS
PHOTOGRAPHIE (Photography as Art - Art as
Photography), Berlinische Galerie, Berlin
(catalogue)
1. Internationale Foto-Triennale, Esslingen
(catalogue)
NEW PHOTOGRAPHY V, The Museum of
Modern Art, New York
1990
JETZT BERLIN! (Berlin Now!), Malmö Konst-
hall, Malmö/Sweden (catalogue)
THE BIG PICTURE, San Francisco Museum of
Modern Art, San Francisco
1991
L' ORDINE DELLE COSE, Palazzo delle espo-
sizioni, Rome (catalogue)
BERLIN! - THE BERLINISCHE GALERIE ART
COLLECTION VISITS DUBLIN, The Hugh Lane
Municipal Gallery of Modern Art, Dublin

(catalogue)

SURGENCE - LA CRÉATION PHOTOGRAPHIQUE
CONTEMPORAINE EN ALLEMAGNE, Comédie
de Reims, Reims et al (catalogue)

Renta-Preis '91, Kunsthalle Nürnberg,
Nuremberg (catalogue)

BREMER KUNSTPREIS '91, Kunsthalle
Bremen (catalogue)

ZONE D - INNENRAUM (Zone D - Internal
Space), Leipziger Galerie für zeitgenössische
Kunst, Leipzig (catalogue)
1991/92

INTERFERENZEN - KUNST AUS WESTBERLIN
1960 - 1990 (Interferences - West Berlin Art
1960 - 1990), Museum of Foreign Art,
Riga/Latvia and Marmorpalais, St. Petersburg/
Russia (catalogue)
1991/92

BERLIN ART SCENE - A DOUBLE MENTALITY,
Sezon Museum of Art, Tokyo et al
(catalogue)

List of Exhibited Works:

UNTITLED - Diptych No. 35, 1989/91
C-print, 106,5 x 143 cm
Courtesy of the artist

UNTITLED - Diptych No. 39, 1989/92
C-print, 121,5 x 363 cm
Courtesy of the artist

UNTITLED - Diptych No. 52, 1991
C-print, 181,5 x 243 cm
Courtesy of Galerie Nikolaus Sonne, Berlin

WEIGERUNG (Refusal), 1991
C-print, 181,5 x 121,5 cm
Courtesy of Galerie vier, Berlin

UNTITLED, 1992
C-print, 166,5 x 121,5 cm
Courtesy of the artist

(e.) Twin Gabriel - Plastic Planning

1962
born in Halberstadt/Harzrand
1968-87
attended various educational institutions
1990
after working as an Auto-Perforation-Artist,
retrained as an expert on *Plastic Planning*
(e.) Twin (Else) Gabriel lives and works in
Berlin and Los Angeles.

One Person Exhibitions:

1986
ONE WAY/SCHWARZSCHILD/KALTE ANSCHLÄGE
(ONE WAY/ Black Sign/ Cold Attacks),
Kreiskulturhaus Berlin-Treptow
POLPUZZLE, Bauhaus, Dessau
1989
MEA CULPA (SCHLAGSCHATTEN) (mea culpa -
Cast Shadow), Galerie 85, Berlin
1990
DU UND DIE GEFAHR (YOU AND THE DAN-
GER), Feuersozietät Berlin-Schöneberg
1991
ZIFFER & ZUKUNFT (DIE ZWECKLOK) (Figure
& Future - the FUNCTIONAL LOCOMOTIVE),
Ludwigforum für Internationale Gegen-
wartskunst, Aachen
ZUSTAND BESCHLEUNIGTEN SCHWEIGENS
(State Of Speedy Silence), Galerie Weißer
Elefant, Berlin (catalogue)
1992
FLATTEN, Galerie vier, Berlin (catalogue)

Selected Group Exhibitions:

1989
ZWISCHENSPIELE (Intermezzos), Elefanten
Press Galerie and Kunstamt im Künstler-
haus Bethanien, Berlin (catalogue)
1990
RAUMA BIENNALE BALTICUM, Rauma/Finland
(catalogue)
JETZT BERLIN! (Berlin Now!), Malmö Konst-
hall, Malmö/Sweden (catalogue)
NEW TERRITORY, School of the Museum of
Fine Arts, Boston (catalogue)
L' ORDINE DELLE COSE, Palazzo delle espo-
sizioni, Rome (catalogue)
BEMERKE DEN UNTERSCHIED (Notice the
Difference), Kunsthalle Nürnberg, Nurem-
berg (catalogue)
STATE OF SPEEDY SILENCE, P.S.1-Museum,
New York
AUSSERHALB VON MITTENDRIN (Outside of
the Center), Technischer Innovationspark,
Berlin (catalogue)
ANNÄHERUNG AN DAS KREUZ (Approaching
the Cross), Martinikirche, Halberstadt/Harz-
rand
1990-92
CHANGE OF GAIT, Goethe House, New York
KORRESPONDENZEN (Correspondences), Ber-
linische Galerie, Berlin and Casa Masaccio
e Palazzo Pretorio, San Giovanni Valdarno/
Italy (catalogue)

List of Exhibited Works:

KAMBRIUMKONSERVEN (Cambrian Pre-
serves), 1992
8 aquaria, 60 x 30 x 30 cm each, with cov-
ers and lighting
8 steel stands, 140 x 60 x 30 cm each
compressor, air stones, water, stickers
(proper names and sequences of pictures)
Courtesy of the artist

Raimund Kummer

1954
born in Mengerhausen/Waldeck
1972-75
student of philosophy and religious studies
at the Freie Universität Berlin
1972-77
Hochschule der Künste Berlin
1977
master student under Fred Thieler
1978-87
joint artistic projects: RÄUME, LÜTZOW-
STRASSE - SITUATION, BÜRO BERLIN
1980/81
DAAD scholarship in New York
1984
P.S.1 grant in New York
1992
Grant for Deutsche Akademie, Villa
Massimo, Rome
Raimund Kummer lives and works in
Berlin.

Selected One Person Exhibitions:

1979
Lützowstraße - Situation 4, Berlin
(catalogue)
1979-80
anonymous sculptures in the streets of
Berlin
1980
REINGELEGT (Cheated/Placed in),
Büro Berlin, Suarezstraße 28, 1 Berlin 19
STUYVESANT LINOLEUM, First Ave./7th St.,
New York, North West Side
1982
AUF DER BRÜCKE (On the bridge), Admiral-
straße, Berlin
1985
Galerie Fahnenmann, Berlin (catalogue)
Künstlerhaus Stuttgart, Stuttgart
1986
Kunstforum (Städtische Galerie im

Lenbachhaus), Munich (catalogue)
 1987
 Galerie Magers, Bonn
 INSTALLATION No. 1, Regent Theatre, Melbourne (catalogue)
 INSTALLATION No. 2, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne (catalogue)
 1988
 Kunstraum München, Munich (catalogue)
 1989
 Galerie Kicken-Pauseback, Cologne
 Stichting de Appel Foundation, Amsterdam (catalogue)
 1990
 Galerie Fricke, Düsseldorf
 1991
 Galerie Six Friedrich, Munich
 Kunsthalle Hamburg (catalogue)
 1992
 MOST, Galerie Fricke, Düsseldorf

Selected Group Exhibitions:

1980
 Büro Berlin (founded with Hermann Pitz and Fritz Rahmann Berlin Office), Lindenstraße 39, Berlin
 1981
 ART ALLEMAGNE AUJOURD'HUI, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris (catalogue)
 1982
 AN DER BAR (At the Bar), Boeckstraße 7, Berlin
 SKULPTUR: KÖLN-EHRENFELD (catalogue)
 1983
 KÜNSTLER-RÄUME (Artist Spaces), Kunstverein Hamburg (catalogue)
 1984
 DISPERSIONS (TAPACHULA), Musée d'Art Moderne, Montreal (flyer)
 3. + 4. DIMENSION, La Raffinerie du Plan K, Brussels (catalogue)
 1986
 BÜRO BERLIN. EIN PRODUKTIONSBEGRIFF, Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin (catalogue)
 1987
 BLOW UP, Württembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart (catalogue)
 SKULPTUR PROJEKTE, Westfälisches Landesmuseum, Münster (catalogue)
 STATIONS, Centre International Art Contemporain, Montreal (catalogue)
 EMOTOPE, Büro Berlin, Berlin (catalogue)
 PERMANENT COLLECTION, Brooklyn Museum, New York (catalogue)

1988
 APERTO 88, XLIII Biennale di Venezia (catalogue)
 1989
 PER GLI ANNI NOVANTA: NOVE ARTISTI A BERLINO, Padiglione Arte Contemporanea, Milan (catalogue)
 IN BETWEEN AND BEYOND, The Power Plant, Toronto (catalogue)
 1990
 THE READYMADE BOOMERANG, The 8th Biennale of Sidney, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sidney (catalogue)
 1991
 GESTALTETE RÄUME - ARS VIVA (Designed Spaces - ars viva), Kunstverein Münster (catalogue)
 1992
 ARBEITSMODELLE (Working Moduls), Galerie Six Friedrich, Munich

List of Exhibited Works:

STATUS QUO, 1989
 transparency behind glass, plywood, silver leaf, 75 x 78,5 x 48,5 cm
 Courtesy of Galerie R+M Fricke, Düsseldorf
 ROSEBUD, 1991
 bronze, C-print/glass, 650 x 400 x 115 cm
 Courtesy of Galerie Six Friedrich, Munich

Via Lewandowsky

1963
 born in Dresden
 1966
 blinded in the right eye
 1982-87
 student at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste, Dresden
 1988
 founded the *free practice* (with Pina Lewandowsky) in Dresden
 1988
 transferred the *free practice* to Berlin-Moabit in West Berlin
 Via Lewandowsky lives and works in Berlin and New York.

One Person Exhibitions:

1988
 IM EISCHWEISS DER LETZTEN TAUSEND TAGE (In the Egg Sweat of the Last Thousand Days), VEB Denkmalpflege, Dresden

TAG DES GRASESSERS (Day of the Grass Eater), Zionskirche Dresden
 SUBLIME LIEBE (Sublime Love), Samariterkirche East Berlin (with Else Gabriel)
 1989
 SIE KÖNNEN NICHTS SCHREIEN HÖREN - ACHT PORTRAITS ZUR EUTHANASIE (They can't hear anything screaming), Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, West Berlin (catalogue)
 1990
 ZWÖLF BAHREN ZUR VERBRÜDERUNG (Twelf Stretchers for Fraternization), Galerie vier, Berlin (catalogue)
 1991
 BIOLOGIE DER ERMÜDUNG (Biology of Fatigue), Stadtgalerie Saarbrücken (catalogue)
 PERPLEXING INTANGIBILITIES LIKE TASTE, Goethe-Institute Toronto
 1992
 MOTOR (Something about Resuming of the Terminal Velocity), Galerie Sonne, Berlin (catalogue)

Selected Group Exhibitions:

1989
 MENETEKEL (Warning Sign), Galerie Nord, Dresden (with Micha Brendel and Else Gabriel) (catalogue)
 ZWISCHENSPIELE (Intermezzos), Elefanten Press Galerie, West Berlin (catalogue)
 1990
 L'AUTRE ALLEMAGNE HORS LES MURS, La Grande Halle de la Villette, Paris (catalogue)
 DIE KERBE IM BOOT (The Notch in the Boat), Galerie Sonne, Berlin
 JETZT BERLIN! (Berlin Now!), Malmö Konsthall, Malmö/Sweden (catalogue)
 NEW TERRITORY, School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (catalogue)
 ZUR LAGE DES HAUPTES (On the Position of the Head), in: DIE ENDLICHKEIT DER FREIHEIT, Berlin (catalogue)
 1991
 FRÜHES ERKENNEN (Early Recognition), in: CALCULI, Neuer Berliner Kunstverein, Berlin (catalogue)
 FÄULNISPROBE (Rotting Trial), in: L'ORDINE DELLE COSE, Palazzo delle esposizioni, Rome (catalogue)
 BEMERKE DEN UNTERSCHIED (Notice the Difference), Kunsthalle Nürnberg, Nuremberg (catalogue)
 DIREKTE VERHERRLICHUNG (Direct Glorifica-

tion) in: MODELS OF REALITY: APPROACHES TO REALISM IN MODERN GERMAN ART, Harris Museum, Preston/England (catalogue)
ZUKUNFT - BIOLOGIE DER ERMÜDUNG IV (Future - Biology of Fatigue IV), in: ACHT MAL ZWEI AUS SIEBEN, Neue Galerie, Graz/Austria et al (catalogue)
1991/92

RETE DES PROBLEMS (The Residuals of the Problem), in: INTERFERENZEN - KUNST AUS WESTBERLIN 1960 - 1990 (Interferences - West Berlin Art 1960 - 1990), Museum of Foreign Art, Riga/Latvia and Marmorpalais, St. Petersburg/Russia (catalogue)
BERLIN ART SCENE - A DOUBLE MENTALITY, Sezon Museum of Art, Tokyo et al (catalogue)
1992

CONCLUSION BY DESTRUCTION, in: ENCOUNTERS WITH DIVERSITY, P.S.1-Museum, New York

ANOMALIE NORMALER DAUER (Anomaly of the Standard Duration), in: DOCUMENTA IX, Kassel/Germany (catalogue)

List of Exhibited Works:

COUNTERSELECTION, 1992

600 photocopies, 20 x 20 cm each

16 color bolsters, 100 x 140 x 3 cm each

Courtesy of the artist

Raffael Rheinsberg

1943

born in Kiel

1958-61

apprenticeship as a founder at the MaK, Kiel-Friedrichsort

1973-79

student of the Fachhochschule für Gestaltung, Kiel, under Prof. Zimmermann
Raffael Rheinsberg lives and works in Berlin.

Selected One Person Exhibitions:

1979

ANHALTER BAHNHOF - RUINE ODER TEMPEL (Anhalt Train Station - Ruin or Temple), Galerie Giannozzo, West Berlin (catalogue)
1981

VON UNTEN NACH OBEN (From Below to Above), Museum Sophienblatt, Kiel
WÖRTLICHE PHOTOGRAPHIE (Literal Photography), Galerie Giannozzo, West Berlin

(catalogue)

1982

BOTSCHAFTEN - ARCHÄOLOGIE EINES KRIEGES (Messages - Archeology of a War), Berlin Museum, West Berlin (catalogue)

1983

IN FREMDER ERDE (In Foreign Soil), Brooklyn, New York

1984

OST(East), Galerie Giannozzo, West Berlin
INSTALLATIONEN U.S.F. (Installations U.S.F.), Bergen/Norway (catalogue)

1985

KLAPPBRÜCKE (Drawbridge), Galerie Nordenhake, Malmö/Sweden

TENTER LE DIABLE SANS PEINDRE AU MUR, Maison de la Culture, Reims/France

KEINE KUNST (No Art), Objects and Installations, Wewerka Galerie, West Berlin

1986

St. Annen Museum, Lübeck

MAGNET TON GEGENSTÄNDE (Magnet Sound Objects), Galerie Nemo, Eckernförde

1987

MANHATTAN - DAS E ALS ELEMENT DER ARCHITEKTUR (Manhattan - the E as an Element of Architecture), Galerie Nemo, Eckernförde

1988

ÜBER DEN MUSEALEN RAUM HINAUS (Beyond Museum Space), Stadtgalerie im Sophienhof, Kiel (catalogue)

1989

DER FRIES VON SUOMENLINNA UND EINS ZUM ANDEREN (The Suomenlinna Frieze and One to the Other), Galleria Augusta, Helsinki/Finland (catalogue)

ZERSTÖRTE BILDER (Distroyed Pictures), Langemarckhalle, Berlin (with Lilli Engel)
1990

INWENDIG (Inward), Städtische Galerie am Markt, Schwäbisch Hall

1991

Galerie vier, Berlin (catalogue)

DAS DING AN SICH (The Thing Itself), Forum Bilker Straße, Düsseldorf (catalogue)

DER KREISLAUF DER DINGE (The Circulation of Things), Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, Mexico City (catalogue)

1992

Galerie im Winter, Bremen

Selected Group Exhibitions since 1990:

1990

RADAR, International Art Exhibition,

Kotka/Finland (catalogue)

AMBIENTE BERLIN (Berlin Ambience), XLIV Biennale di Venezia (catalogue)

DIE ENDLICHKEIT DER FREIHEIT (The Finiteness of Freedom), Berlin (catalogue)
1991

BERLIN! - THE BERLINISCHE GALERIE ART COLLECTION VISITS DUBLIN, The Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art, Dublin (catalogue)

1991/92

INTERFERENZEN - KUNST AUS WESTBERLIN 1960 - 1990 (Interferences - West Berlin Art 1960 - 1990), Museum of Foreign Art, Riga/Latvia and Marmorpalais, St. Petersburg/Russia (catalogue)

BERLIN ART SCENE - A DOUBLE MENTALITY, Sezon Museum of Art, Tokyo et al (catalogue)

MEER OFFEN (sea open), Nasjonalgalleriet, Oslo/Norway and Historisches Museum, Dresden (catalogue)

1992

KORRESPONDENZEN (Correspondences), Berlinische Galerie, Berlin and Casa Masaccio e Palazzo Pretorio, San Giovanni Valdarno/ Italy (catalogue)

ARTE AMAZONAS, Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro (catalogue)

List of Exhibited Works:

OMSK - TOMSK - NOWOSIBIRSK

Potsdam, Russian Barracks 1991

found objects (paper bags soaked in oil)
300 x 400 cm

Courtesy of Galerie vier, Berlin

FÜR SALAMANDER, Berlin 1991

found objects (6 suitcases filled with dyed crocodile skins), 25 x 105 x 50 cm each
Courtesy of Galerie vier, Berlin

JOSEF, Oranienburg 1991/92

found objects (felt boots, neon sign)

10 x 500 x 150 cm

Courtesy of Galerie vier, Berlin

Eran Schaerf

1962

born in Tel Aviv

1978 - 82

student of engineering, Technikum, Givatayim/Israel

1985 - 87

student of city planning and photography,
Hochschule der Künste Berlin
Eran Schaerf lives and works in Berlin and
Brussels.

One Person Exhibitions:

1988

(It's) I prefer chocolate, Galerie Anselm
Dreher, Berlin

1990

covered/behind, Xavier Hufkens Gallery,
Brussels (with Joseph Kosuth)

1991

Schneider u. Sohn, *längen, kürzen, Rosen*
(Tailor and Son, *lengthen, shorten, Roses*),
Zwinger Galerie, Berlin

Selected Group Exhibitions:

1987

Hope you got organized, in: FROM THE
NEWS AGENCY, Künstlerhaus Bethanien,
Berlin (catalogue)

1989

WRITTEN IN LANGUAGE, Impulse e.V.,
Hamburg (with Ulrike Grossarth), in: D&S,
Kunstverein Hamburg (catalogue)
untitled, VU, Kutscherhaus, Berlin
(catalogue)

1990

untitled, announced with Wagtail,
Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin; Künstler-
haus Stuttgart; Kunstverein Hamburg;
OPEN-BOX, Karl Ernst Osthaus Museum,
Hagen, and mailed cards

1991

a b c society, in: TAKE OVER, Fabian Carls-
son Gallery, London
L' homme de la lettre du soleil de la
femme, in: WEALTH OF NATIONS, Centre for
Contemporary Arts, Ujazdowski Castle,
Warsaw/Poland

Card Publications:

(It's) I prefer chocolate, with a text by
Rainer Borgemeister

WRITTEN IN LANGUAGE, 16 cards, Impulse
e.V., Hamburg and Kunstverein Hamburg
untitled, 1 plan (with Ulrike Grossarth:
6 place cards), Impulse e.V., Hamburg
Wagtail, 29 cards, Künstlerhaus Bethanien,
Berlin

L' homme de la lettre du soleil de la
femme, 12 cards, Centre for Contemporary
Arts, Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw, 1991

List of Exhibited Works:

a b c society, 1990
paper, cardboard, photocopies, black-and-
white photographs, color photographs,
plexiglass, 18 parts, different sizes
Courtesy of Zwinger Galerie, Berlin

Georg Zey

1962

born in Limburg/Lahn

1982 - 84

student of fine art at the Gesamthoch-
schule Kassel

1984 - 88

student of sculpture at the Hochschule der
Künste Berlin

1989

Grant from the Senator for Cultural Affairs,
Berlin

Georg Zey lives and works in Berlin.

One Person Exhibitions:

1986

Biesentaler 21, Berlin (with Uwe Rachow)

1989

Galerie Klawitter, Cologne
Shin Shin Galerie, Berlin (with Maria Eich-
horn) (catalogue)

1990

Galerie Ermer, Berlin

1992

Galerie vier, Berlin (catalogue)
Kunstsammlungen der Stadt Limburg
(catalogue)

Selected Group Exhibitions:

1987

DINGE UND BILDER (Things and Images),
Hochschule der Künste Berlin

1988

6 RICHTIGE (6 on the Mark), Katakombe,
Monumentenstraße, Berlin

1989

SCHÜLER DER HOCHSCHULE DER KÜNSTE
BERLIN (Students of the Hochschule der
Künste Berlin), 6. Ausstellung der Jürgen
Ponto Stiftung, Kunstverein Frankfurt/Main
and Villa Grisebach, Berlin (catalogue)
ANSICHTEN (Views), Stadtgalerie im
Sophienhof, Kiel (catalogue)
KUNSTPREIS JUNGER WESTEN (Art Prize
Young West), Kunsthalle Recklinghausen
(catalogue)

1990

JETZT BERLIN! (Berlin Now!), Malmö Konst-
hall, Malmö/Sweden (catalogue)

T2, KX Kampnagel, Hamburg (catalogue)

TREPPE - LA ESCALERA (Staircase), Vent de
la Vega, Madrid (catalogue)

1, 2, 3, Galerie Wewerka & Weiss, Berlin
(catalogue)

EUROPE UNKNOWN, Palac Sztuki TPSP, WKS
Wawel, Cracow/Poland (catalogue)

1991

ZWISCHEN EINS UND ZWEI (Between One
and Two), Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin
(catalogue)

L'ORDINE DELLE COSE, Palazzo delle espo-
sizioni, Rome (catalogue)

1991/92

BERLIN ART SCENE - A DOUBLE MENTALITY,
Sezon Museum of Art, Tokyo et al (cata-
logue)

List of Exhibited Works:

UNTITLED, 1990

PVC-cowboys, 21 x 47 x 27 cm
Courtesy of Galerie vier, Berlin

UNTITLED, 1990

Playing-cards Rijksmuseum
9 x 6 x 3 cm each
Courtesy of the artist

WAS IHR WOLLT (What you will), 1991

cast epoxy resin/polyester letters
89 x 109 x 78 cm
Courtesy of the artist

UNTITLED, 1991

steel/magnifying glasses, 67 x 167 x 85 cm
Courtesy of the artist

UNTITLED, 1992

PVC, 60 x 95 x 95 cm
Courtesy of Galerie vier, Berlin

UNTITLED, 1992

glass marbles/adhesive, 27 x 30 x 30 cm
Courtesy of Kleinsimlinghaus u. Partner,
Düsseldorf

UNTITLED, 1992

glass marbles/adhesive, 30 x 33 x 33 cm
Courtesy of Galerie vier, Berlin

